

## **The Report of the Defenders of Human Rights Center on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran for the Winter Months of 2008-2009**

Thu 4 06 2009

The Defenders of Human Rights Center has published its report covering the situation of human rights in the winter months of 2008-2009. In the report this human rights NGO has criticized the treatment of civil activists, and has provided recommendations on adopting strategies designed to reduce violations of the rights of citizens as well as strategies designed to reduce tensions between political, cultural and social activists and government officials. The report is provided below:

The Report of the Defenders of Human Rights Center on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran for the Winter Months of 2008-2009

Introduction:

The Defenders of Human Rights Center in accordance with its bylaws has identified three responsibilities for itself: legal services provided on a pro-bono basis to those accused of political crimes or those facing accusations because of their beliefs; support for families of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience; and regular reporting on the situation of human rights and human rights violations in Iran. Despite the fact that the offices of the Defenders of Human Rights Center were shut by officials in December, 2008, the DHRC continues to carry-out its activities and in this respect has published its quarterly report on the human rights situation in Iran, covering the winter months of 2008-2009.

This report is being published at the beginning of the Iranian new year (March 2009), a time when civil society activists were forced to endure the most extreme forms of pressures. These days we have been witness to the mass arrests of political, trade union, and student activists as well as the violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this day and age human rights are no longer viewed to be an exclusive domain of governments. Additionally, the belief that governments are authorized to have total control over the good of their people, without giving due attention to and fulfilling their primary roles as the protectors of human dignity of their citizens has come under serious challenge. Along the lines of such logic, the Center for Defenders of Human Rights as an NGO, despite all the obstacles on its path, including the illegal closure of its offices, has taken up the task of published its quarterly report on human rights and has made it available publicly.

Section One—Civil and Political Rights:

The Iranian government in accordance with assurances in its own laws and in line with the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) to which it is a signatory and therefore obliged-an obligation which is outlined as well in Article 9 of the Iranian Civil Code-- has to pay due attention to ensuring the civil and political rights of individuals. But the current human rights situation in Iran does not seem very promising, even if assessed based on a relative commitment to upholding fundamental rights. The following is the report on the human rights situation in Iran covering the winter months of 2008-2009 compiled by the Defenders of Human Rights Center.

I. The Situation of Political and Social Dissidents

The following is an outline of human rights issues and reports that have been received by the Defenders of Human Rights Center:

A: Arrests

1) Ali Nazari, the former MP from Arak, has according to reports from the News Channel been arrested on the charge of spying for European countries. Jinous Sobhani, the former Administrative Assistant at the Defenders of Human Rights Center, Hassan Assadi, Hojat Kalashi, Head of the Pan-Iranist Youth Organization, Javad Alizadeh and Ahmad Ghavidel, Director of the Organization for Hemophiliacs were also arrested. Abdollah Abbasi Javan, Professor at Shahid Rajaei University in Tehran and an Azarbaijan civil activist was released.

2) The corpse of Hashem Ramezani, a originally from one of the villages in Bookan and resident of the city of Mahabad, was delivered to his family after he had spent four days in detention.

B. Court Hearings

1) In follow-up to the case against Abbas Palizdar and other defendants in the same case, a closed court session to hear the defense of three of the others accused in this case was held in Branch 76 of the Criminal Court of Tehran Province. The court session for the two other MPs associated with Abbas Palizdar was rescheduled, due to the fact that the MPs accused in the case were unable to show for trial. These MPs have been accused of "aiding" in this case.

C. Court Sentences Issued

1) Behrooz Alizadeh, Vodood Saadati, Rahim Gholami, Hossein Hosseini and Ardeshir Karimi Khiavi, five Azari civil activists, were sentenced to 5 years imprisonment in exile in a closed court hearing. Hamid Vaalhayee and Gholam Najafi two Azari civil activists were sentenced to one year mandatory prison sentence by the second branch of the Revolutionary Courts in Tabriz. According to the sentence issued in this case, 9 months of imprisonment will be suspended for the period of 5 years and 3 months of the sentence is



mandatory. Iraj Hassani an Azari activists in Tabriz was sentenced to a two year mandatory prison sentence. Salah Eldin Payravi and Latif Sherafat and Abdolvahed Abdollah Zadeh three residents of Urumieh were charged with cooperation with various political parties opposed to the government and sentenced to two years in prison. Hamin Sufi and Jalal Sufi two residents of Mahabad were charged with cooperation with an opposition political group and sentenced to 24 months of prison, with 6 months being mandatory and 18 months suspended for the period of three years. Gabriel Khosravi of Sanandaj was accused of membership in a Kurdish political group and charged with enmity with god and in the end sentenced to 20 years mandatory prison sentence in exile to be served in the city of Bandar Abbas.

#### D. Other Cases

- 1) Amir Saraan, died in prison while serving the fifth year of his prison term in Rajaie Shahr Prison in Karaj. The death of Amir Saraan is the third such incident in Rajaie Shahr Prison in Karaj. In the last months of his life, Amir Saraan was not in good physical health and as such had repeatedly requested leave from prison officials. But his requests were denied. Additionally, the burial ceremony of Amir Saraan faced difficulties. The family of Amir Saraan, after his death, lodged a complaint against the head of the Rajaie Shahr Prison as well as officials at the Prison's clinic and requested a medical examination of Saraan's remains to identify the exact cause of death.
- 2) Abdol Fatah Soltani, lawyer and member of the Defenders of Human Rights Center has lodged a complaint against Saied Mortazavi, the Tehran Prosecutor and Hassan Zareh Dehnavi (AKA: Judge Hadad) and Majid Hadad Rasekh (Investigative Prosecuting Judge at the Security Branch One of the Revolutionary Courts) in relation to one of his cases. Additionally in relation to another case, Mr. Soltani has lodged a separate complaint against Hassan Zareh Dehnavi and the Assistant Prosecutor of the Security Branch of Tehran Public Courts.
- 3) Dr. Hessem Firouzi (a medical Doctor) was transferred to prison to serve his 15 month prison sentence.
- 4) The request for prison leave of Shahram Jazayeri was denied. Abbas Palizdar too was transferred to Rajaie Shahr prison in Karaj.
- 5) The public relations office of the Revolutionary Courts announced that the accused in the case of "Velvet Revolution" have been sentenced to prison by the 15th Branch of the Revolutionary Courts in Tehran and have since been transferred to prison.
- 6) On the International Mother Language Day (February 21), restrictions and pressures on Azari Minorities intensified. Additionally news reports from various cities in Azarbaijan province indicate that officials at the office of public spaces in these cities have put pressure on business owners who have selected non-Persian names for their businesses.
- 7) Security and police forces once again prevented the holding of memorial services on the anniversary of the death of Mehdi Bazargan, who immediately following the Revolution serves as the Prime Minister of the Coalition Government.
- 8) According to reports parts of the Khavaran Cemetary where a number of political prisoners who were executed in the 1980's are buried have been destroyed and vandalized.
- 9) The High Council of Physicians has objected to the disqualification of 350 physicians from standing for elections for the Association of Physicians.

## II. The Situation of Publications, Press, Writers and the Print Media

### A. Arrests

- 1) Nader Karimi Jooni, Journalist was arrested in December 2008 and Roxana Saberi an Iranian-American Journalist was arrested in February 2009. Saberi was subsequently tried on the charge of espionage and found guilty and sentenced to eight years in prison. Additionally, four journalists and two football managers were arrested on the charge of "dealing and theft."
- 2) Javad Alizadeh and Abbas Jalilian who have been engaged in activities related to the Kurdish culture and language were arrested.
- 3) A number of Rap musicians were arrested after their return to Iran, from a trip abroad.

### B. Trials

- 1) Trials were held in relation to cases brought against Fereydoun Verdinejad and Behrooz Behzadi Managing Editor/Publishers of the weekly Iran-e Javan (Young Iran); Abdul Hamid Mohtasham, Managing Editor/Publisher of the weekly "Yalesarat Alhossein", and Ali SalehAbadi, the Managing editor of Hambastegi Daily. Additionally the cases against "Kargozaran Daily", "Iran Daily", "Nameh Quarterly" and "Taak Publication" were brought to court.
- 2) The court hearings in relation to charges brought against Habibolah Gholeyshi, the Managing Editor of "Eghtesade Pooya" Daily, Mostafa Kokabian, the Managing Editor of "Mardom Salari" Daily, and Ali Yousefpour, Managing Editor of "Siasate Rooz" Daily were postponed and will be rescheduled.
- 3) A court case against the Managing Editor of the Website "Mardom Yar" and the Website "Khodro News" has been initiated.
- 4) The court trial to address the charges against writer Hamid Vallayee has been held.

### C. Issuing of Sentences

- 1) Roozbeh Mirebrahim, Omid Memarian, Shahram Rafizadeh, and Javad Gholam Tamimi, four bloggers were sentenced to a combined sentence of eight and half years of imprisonment, and 124 floggings. Keyvan Samimi Behbahani, the Managing Editor of [humanrights-ir.org/.../view\\_print\\_versio...](http://humanrights-ir.org/.../view_print_versio...)

the Monthly "Nameh" was convicted following his trial. Additionally, his office was searched by individuals who claimed to be tax officials.

2) After the Press Oversight Jury ruled to ban the daily "Tehran-e Emrooz" the decision was overturned by the public courts in Tehran. The Press Oversight Jury appealed the decision by the Tehran court. The appeals court after reviewing the case upheld the ruling by the Tehran court, which nullified the ban placed on "Tehran-e Emrooz" Daily.

3) Kamal Sharifi, a Kurdish Journalist and political activist who in the Spring of 2009 was injured in the city of Saghez and then arrested, was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

#### D. Other Cases

1) Omid Reza Mir Sayafi, 28, was taken to prison to serve his two and half year prison sentence in Winter of 2008, but lost his life in the Spring of 2009, while in detention.

2) Abdolreza Tajik and Nasser Zarafashan were banned from travel while on their way to attend international conferences at which they intended to provide speeches.

3) The weekly "Hemat" and the Kurdish Weekly "Roj-he Laat" as well as the daily "Kargozaran" were all banned from publication. The publications "Neday-e Jame'e" and "Navay-e Vaght" have received two warnings from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

4) The site of Defenders of Human Rights Center was blocked on its first day of publication, and the websites "Yaari" and "Yaari News" which supported the candidacy of Mohammad Khatami for the elections were also blocked. Additionally the website "Balatarin" was hacked. Further, tens of web-based news sites have been blocked in Iran, including the site of the Radio France International and Deutsche Well.

5) The Managing Editor of the publication "Kian" was summoned to court through an announcement published in the press.

6) In the course of investigating the case against the daily "Kargozaran" 24 year old journalist Amir Hadi Anvari was charged with assisting in the publication of lies intent hurting the image of government officials.

7) Hossein Derakhshan, weblogger, continues to remain in prison without any clarification or information about his situation. The spokesperson for the Judiciary stated that the charges against Derakhshan are in relation to [disrespect] shown toward Shiite Imams.

8) Stenio Solinas, the journalist for the Italian publication "Il Journala" was expelled from Iran.

9) Managing Editors in the Province of Golestan issued a letter addressed to high ranking government officials urging them to take steps to address the crisis in the press within the province, and to pay damages and to take measures to restore and remedy the infringement of the rights of journalists in the province. Additionally, in Kurdistan, press professionals issued as statement objecting to the banning of publications in that province.

10) Ahmad Roozbehani, Chief of "Morality Security Police" announced that they will be prosecuting "internet criminals." This announcement follows the passage of the law addressing internet crimes by the Parliament. The Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance while pointing to the fact that "some countries have been able to first control the internet and then make it available to users in their country" told Borna News Agency, which is affiliated with governmental body the National Youth Organization, that in Iran "the internet has entered Iranian society without any analysis or awareness and this has resulted in limitations and the blocking of sites." Mohammad Safar Harandi, pointing to the availability of MMS or visual messaging service through mobile phones in Iran, explained that he is worried about the undermining of social values through visual messages passed through mobile phones.

11) The concert of the group "Début," an American-Indonesian musical group, was cancelled unexpectedly. "Darkoob" is a musical group, which tried unsuccessfully on several occasions to hold a concert. The concert of Homayoon Shajarian and the "Dastan" Musical ensemble faced problems, which was followed by criticism and threats against Mohammad Reza Shajarian.

12) Reporters without Borders expressed their support for the complaint [against government officials] lodged by the son of Zahra Kazemi, a journalist who died in detention.

13) Mohsen Makhmalbaf, in a press conference on the occasion of the showing of his films at a French Film Festival, criticized censorship in Iranian cinema.

14) For the International Fajr Film Festival, some producers have been told that their films did not make it to the Festival, while others were prevented from participating in the Festival because they did not have a permit to screen their films. The films "Book of Laws" by Maziar Miri, "Sad Saal Be in Saalha" by Saman Moghadam, and "Atashkar" by Mohsen Amir Yousefi, were omitted despite

the fact that their directors had made changes to the films. The films "Padash" by Kamal Tabrizi and "Harzandeh Sood" by Behrooz Afkhami were among films which were not shown to the jury because of technical problems, despite the fact that the producers of these films expressed interest in being included in the festival.

15) More than 100 literary, cultural and civil activists in Kermanshah and Ilam issued a statement objecting to the arrest of Abbas Jalalian and Mehdi Hamidi, two cultural and literary activists.

16) The IRIB national broadcast banned the showing of faces of female actors with heavy makeup.

17) The Tehran and Revolutionary Courts Prosecutor said that those who advertise on satellite television programs if their actions can be proven to be examples of addressed in the second section of article 500 of the penal code, will be prosecuted and sentenced to one year in prison.

### III. The Situation of Students

What can be reported with respect to the situation of students in Iran in the winter of 2008 is the arrest of a large number of students or their summons to the disciplinary committees in the university, or their trials and their suspension from studies. The following has been reported to the Defenders of Human Rights Center:

#### A. Arrests

1. With the acceptance by the courts that the sentence issued by the 15th Branch of the Revolutionary Courts, in the case of Saied Razavi Faqih, a former member of the student organization, the Office to Consolidate Unity, was issued in absentia, an order for his release was issued. Additionally, Mehdi Nouri was released after serving his two year prison term; Vahid Sheikh Begloo, student activist and former member of the Arman, a student organization at Azad University of Tabriz was released on a 50 Million Toman Bail (roughly \$50,000); and Hossein Hosseini the former secretary of the Islamic Student Organization at the Razi Institute in the city of Ardebil was released from prison.

2. Students at Amir Kabir University who have been arrested include: Jafar Eteghadipour, Pasha Amir Mozafari, Saied Barzegar, Reza Balbasi, Hossein Tarkashvand, Alireza Tahgavi, Majid Tavakoli, Abbas Hakimzadeh, Sajjad Khadem, Mohammad Khataee, Korosh Daneshyar, Anoushiravan Zahedi, Rasoul Sarmadi, Esmail Salmanpour, Kabir Fazeli, Roshanak Fani, Ahmad Ghasaban, Ebrahim Ghorbanpour, Pasha Koohsari, Navid Gorgin, Hamid Mirhosseini, Mehdi Mashayekhi, Nariman Mostafavi, Mohammad Nasiri, Mehdi Yaghoubi, and Yasser Turkman. After students protested the burial of war martyrs on University grounds, a number of students at this university were arrested, the majority of whom have since been released. Ten of these students continue to remain in prison. Shabnam Madadzadeh a student at the Teachers University in Tehran and a member of the Islamic Student Association of this university, Kazem Rezaie the expelled student at Shiraz University, Yunes Mirhosseini, Esmail Jalilvand, Sahar Yazdani, Hamdollah Namjoo, Mohsen Zarin Kamar, Abdul Jalil Rezaie, Loghman Ghadiri Goltapeh, Arash Rahmati and Ahmad Kohansal students at Shiraz University; Kaveh Rezaie and Mohammad Pour Abdullah student activists in the freedom and equality division; Amir Mesbah a Kurdish student at Mahabad University; and Bahman Khodadad from Isfahan University were arrested.

#### B. Court Trials

1) A closed court hearing in the case of Habibollah Latifi, a student from Azad University in Ilam was held. This court sentenced him to execution. The Appeals court has upheld the ruling and has served his lawyer with this decision.

2) Masoumeh Mansouri a student of Amir Kabir University was tried.

3) The court hearing for Mohammad Pour Abdollah, a Chemistry Student at Tehran University was not held, because he was not transferred from prison to court to stand trial.

#### C. Court Sentences

1) Sajjad Radmehr, Faraz Zohtab, Aideen Khajeyee, Amir Mardani and Ehsan Najafi Nasab, students from Tabriz university as well Majid Makooyee student in the field of Ship Construction from Malek Ashtar University in Isfahan were sentenced to one year mandatory prison and two years suspended prison sentence. Vodood Asadi student of Earth Science of Azad University in Rasht, and the former secretary of the Islamic Student Association at Azad University in Ardebil, and Hossein Rahimi Architectural student at Jihad University in Rasht received a one year mandatory prison sentence and a six month mandatory prison sentence respectively. Meghdad Islamkhah, student at Imam Hossein University and the Secretary of the Republication Association at this University was sentenced to a mandatory prison term. Jamal Rahmani a Kurdish student studying Industrial Engineering at Isfahan University was sentenced to three years suspended prison term and eight months mandatory prison term. Hossein Hosseini, Behrooz Alizadeh, Ardeshir Karimi Khiavi, Vodood Saadati, Rahim Gholami each received a 5 year prison term to be served in exile. Asgar Akbarzadeh, an Azari student activist was sentenced to a five year mandatory prison sentence to be served in the city of Zahedan. In separate sentences Amin Nazari, former secretary of human rights at the Islamic Student Association's Office to Consolidate Unity, Siavash Hatam Secretary General of the Islamic Student Association at BuAli Sina University and Mohammad Sayadi the Political Secretary at the Islamic Student Association at BuAli Sina University were sentenced to a collective term of 78 months of prison, 3 semesters suspension from university and 250 thousand Tomans (roughly \$250) in fines.

Salman Araghi the former secretary of the Azari Studies Organization at Payame Noor in Khoy and a member of the Central Council of Avarin NGO in Khoy; Salar Araghi student at the faculty of mechanical engineering at Urumieh University; Hojat Araghi Mechanical Engineering student at the Technical Institute at Urumieh; Payam Elm Ghaliloo Master's Student in Export Management at Azad University in Qazvin; and Ali Akbar Abdulahi Mechanical Engineering Student at the Technical University in Urumieh were each sentenced to a one year suspended prison sentence for the period of two years. Ebrahim Jafarzadeh, the former secretary of this NGO was sentenced to a one year mandatory prison term and two years in exile in Baraz Jaan and Shirzad Hajiloo the other secretary of the NGO was sentenced to a three month mandatory prison term to be served in the city of Khoy.

#### D. Summons to University Disciplinary Committees

1) Mohsen ZarinKamar, Akbar Hassan Pour, Loghman Ghadiri, Houshang and Alma Ranjbar students at Shiraz University were each suspended from university for two terms, and referred to the central university disciplinary committee for issuance of a ruling with respect to charges of "insulting Islamic or national beliefs mores" or committing acts against the state." Amin Karimi and Armin Barazesh were suspended for one term from university. Amin Dorosti received a written warning which would be included in his university file. Kazem Rezaie, Saied Khalatbari, Abduljalil Rezaie, Arash Roostae, Hadi Alamli, Hamdollah Namjoo and two others were collectively subjected to 15 suspended terms from university. For six of these students this sentence implies permanent expulsion from university as the terms of suspension will be counted toward their total time of enrollment, which includes limitations for the purpose of graduation. Additionally, Kazem Rezaie, Abdoljalil Rezaie, and Loghman Ghadiri at Shiraz University were banned from entering the University grounds. Iman Sadighi the political secretary of the Islamic Student Association and Hessam Bagheri current member of the Central Council of the Islamic Student Association each were subjected to one term expulsion, with the suspension counting toward their total time of enrollment at the University. Additionally, Hamid Reza Jahan Tighe and Ali Kiani two students at this same university received a written warning to be included in their student files and were restricted from using university privileges, such as the dormitories. Amir Dorosti was suspended for two terms from university and Ismail Jalilvand, Younes Mir Hosseini, Abdollah Davoodian, Amin Karimi, Ali Sheydani, Shokooh Vasili, Zahra Fatehi Zadeh, Esmail Maadanchi, Razieh Jafari, Saied Khosrow Abadi, were each subjected to one term suspension from university. Ismail Jalilvand's case was referred to the central university disciplinary council. Hamdollah Namjoo and Navid Ghafouri were subjected to one term suspension from university and referred to the central university disciplinary council; Afshin Houshang was subjected to two terms of suspension, the implementation of which will be suspended for the time being; Arash Roostae was subjected to one term suspension from university and referred to the central disciplinary council; Hadi Alamli was suspended from university for the period of one term and referred to the central disciplinary council; Alma Ranjbar was subjected to two terms suspension from university; Amin Karimi was suspended for one term; Amin Dorosti received a disciplinary notice in his file. Ali Taghipour student at Babol Technical University was suspended for one term with the time of suspension counting toward his total time enrollment at University, Hamidreza Jahantigh and Mohsen Barzegar were suspended for one term, Moin Islam Jam, Ali Kiaee, Ahmad Mohamd Nia, Siavash Salimi Nejad, Iman Sadighi, Nima Nahvi, Mohammad Elmi, Hessam Eldin Bagheri all received disciplinary notices to be included in their files. Sadeq Chenari and Ehsan Mazandarani students at the faculty of Journalism received two and one terms suspension from university respectively. Following the summons of a number of students at Sistan and Baluchestan University to the disciplinary committee eight students were served with sentences ranging from two terms of suspension and their permanent expulsion was requested from the Ministry of Science and Education. Additionally, they were prevented from entering the University grounds. Ali Bagheri and Kamran Jalil, members of the Central Council of the Islamic Student Association of Sistan and Baluchestan University, Ibrahim Eskhafi managing editor of the student publication "Panjareh", Ali Namazi managing editor of the publication "Shoraa", Shahriar Hosseinbar the managing editor of the student publication "Siah va Sepid", and Ali Salehi, Saber Rastad, and Milad Hemati Pour were banned from entering university grounds. Ezzatollah Torbati the political secretary and Habib Farahzadi assistant secretary of the Democratic Islamic Student Organization at Tehran University and Medical Sciences University were each suspended for two terms (with the suspension period counting toward total time of enrollment) and banned from entering university grounds during their suspension. Ashkan Zahabian a student at Ferdowsi University in Mashad, was expelled to a university in Mazandaran. Hassan Barzegar, Ahmad Mohamad Nia and Ehsan Bagheri were banned from entering the University of Nooshiravani in Babol where they are enrolled as students.

2) Samaneh Fazlali student at Razi University in Kermanshah and Ali Donyari Masters student at Mazandaran University were called into the disciplinary committees at their respective universities. Based on published reports on the web, after objections to the burial of war martyrs on university grounds, students were called into disciplinary committees. On the other hand, based on reports by these same sites, a number of students at Shahid Beheshti University, most of them female students, were summoned to university disciplinary committees. In one of these cases, one of the female students was called into the disciplinary committee because she was wearing boots at the university. Ali Kiaee, Hamidreza Jahantigh, Iman Sadighi, Hessam Eldin Bagheri the four students at Babol Technical University; Siamin Ghiyasi, Farahnaz Tajehmiri, Ashkan Mosibian, and Mohammad Mahmoudi, the four students at Razi university in Kermanshah, fifteen students at Khaje Nasir university following a complaint by Tehran University, Hamid Reza Sahraiee and Sajjad Hosseini Fakhr students at Science and Industry and Reza Arab the secretary of the Islamic Student Association, Alireza Kiani the political secretary, Milad Hosseini Keshtan, Siavash Safavi, Arnoush Azrahimi, Ali Asghar Adinehvand, Mehdi Davoodian, and Ali Nazari other members of the Central Council of the Islamic Student Association at Mazandaran University along with four others were summoned by the disciplinary committees at their respective universities.

3) After some officials at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education announced that the Allameh Division of the Office to Consolidate Unity was illegal, the office of the Islamic Student Association at Nooshiravani Technical University was also shut down. In other news the office of job creation and entrepreneurship of the students and graduates of the Journalism College was also shut

in other news, the office of job creation and entrepreneurship of the students and graduates of the Journalism College was also shut down. The Oversight Council of Khajeh Nasir Eldin Technical University announced that the Islamic Student Association at the University was illegal.

4) Kourosh Mohammad Kalayeh, a student who was admitted to the college of metallurgy, who in the current term received honors, is facing suspension from university and is currently banned from entering university grounds. Kalayeh has registered several inventions. While he intended to enter university grounds to participate in a ceremony honoring student for their excellence he was prevented from entering university grounds. With the intervention of university Professors, the security offices of the University allowed Kalayeh to enter university grounds for a few hours to receive his award. On the other hand, Ehsan Mansouri, another student of this university, who has been detained for some time, was prevented from entering University grounds during exam period. Additionally, Majid Tavakoli and Ahmad Ghassaban, are waiting for a decision from University officials and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education with respect to their educational status.

#### E. Other Cases

1) Sama Nourani a Baha'i student wrote a letter protesting her dismissal from Sahand University in Tabriz.

2) After protesting against the problems at their University, students from Tafresh University staged a protest in front of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. A group of students from Damghan University staged a protest. Students at the Technical College in the city of Sirjan staged a protest in front of university grounds and refused to go to their classes.

3) Memorial services for 5000 martyrs killed in Halabche were canceled. Some Kurdish students at Tehran University protested the cancelation of this memorial.

4) Mahdieh Golroo the student from Allameh University who had been subjected to two terms of suspension wrote an open letter addressed to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad protesting the suspension.

5) The Turkish language student publication, "Ishil Ay" at Yazd University, of which Vahid Asghari served as managing editor, was banned prior to publishing its second issue. The independent student publication "Cactus," edited by Arman Mirzaiee was banned from publication by the publications oversight council at Razi University. The Turkish language publication "Khalaj" at Yazd University was banned from publication. The Publication "Gam-e No" at Arak University was banned for the period of six months.

6) A group of medical students held a protest in relation to the manner in which tests for medical assistants were held in 2008.

7) A member of the Education and Research Commission of the Parliament announced that the program to segregate students at universities based on sex would be reviewed by the Parliament.

8) The website of Amir Kabir University students has been repeatedly filtered and readers have been prevented from accessing this site since late February.

9) A number of students at the faculty of political science at Azad University in Karaj have requested that Dr. Fatemeh Sadeghi be reinstated as a faculty member at this University, after she was dismissed from her teaching position.

10) Nabi Peermohammadi, a 22 year student from Lorestan, who was a BA student at Tehran University in the faculty of Anthropology, committed suicide by jumping from the fourth floor of the university library building.

11) The head of the institute of distance education, in an interview with ISNA, reported that currently there are approximately 3 million individuals who are not able to continue their higher education.

12) Dr. Ramezan Behdad, member of the faculty of Human Sciences, Dr. Ghazanfar Mirjalili member of faculty of Physics, and Seyed Mohammad Nikoee member of faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science of Yazd University were forced into retirement.

13) Ahmad Islami, professor at Kashan University, and former lecturer at several higher learning institutions such as Isfahan University, Isfahan Technical University, Azad University of Khorasgan, Azad University at Khomeini Shahr, was dismissed from his teaching position at Kashan University.

#### IV. The Situation of Women

1) Susan Razani and Shiva Kheyrbadi were flogged at the central prison in Sannadaj in the Province of Kurdistan. The three year sentence of Alieh Eghdamdoust was implemented.

2) Mehrchereh Moshrefi who was arrested with her husband Abbas Tavadi Doost. and her two children in December was sentenced [humanrights-ir.org/.../view\\_print\\_versio...](http://humanrights-ir.org/.../view_print_versio...)

to a two year suspended prison term for the period of 5 years.

- 3) The request of a judicial review for the case of Zeinab Bayazidi put forth by her lawyer was denied.
- 4) Nafiseh Azad and Bigard Ibrahimy were arrested. After the arrest, the home of Nafiseh Azad was searched and her home and property as a result of this search was seriously disturbed. Shahnaz Gholami, who was sentenced to six months imprisonment, was freed.
- 5) The appeals hearing for four members of the One Million Signatures Campaign, Parvin Ardalan, Nahid Keshavarz, Jelveh Javaheri and Maryam Hosseinkhah, was held.
- 6) Nasrin Sotoodeh, lawyer and Jelveh Javaheri were interrogated in the Revolutionary Courts. Parastoo Alahyaari, Nahid Keshavarz and Sarah Imanian were summoned to court. Nahid Mirhaj was summoned to court and arraigned.
- 7) According to Abdol Fatah Soltani, one of the defense lawyers in the case of the suspicious death of Dr. Zahra Baniyaghoub while she was in prison, some of the evidence in this case has been destroyed. Of significance are the clothes that Dr. Zahra Baniyaghoub was wearing at the time of her death, which those accused in the case have been unwilling to turn over. Zahra's father also believes that some parts of the case files, related to the interrogation done of his daughter, are also missing.
- 8) Police on the 8th of March, prevented the convening of ceremonies commemorating International Women's Day. As such, an event which was scheduled to take place on the occasion of International Women's Day in Varsho Park on March 8th was not allowed to take place. In Tabriz too, individuals in charge of various organizations, who had requested permits to hold meetings and events commemorating March 8th, were denied such permits.
- 9) According to the World Health Organization 140 million girls around the world are subjected to female genital mutilation. The majority of these girls and women are in 28 African countries. According to reports female genital mutilation also takes part in some areas in Iran, mostly in the provinces of Khuzestan, Lorestan and Kurdistan. Kurdistan has the highest figures in this respect.
- 10) The head of the Center for Advising and Social Work of the Police force reported that the use of "Shishe" an illicit chemical drug among girls has increased.
- 11) Women were prevented from entering the Volleyball stadium because the athlete Mohammad Reza Golzar was present.
- 12) The Simone de Beauvoir Award was presented to the One Million Signatures Campaign and Simin Behbahani received it on behalf of the Campaign.

#### V. The Situation of Those sentenced to Death and Juvenile Offenders

In relation to the situation of those who have been sentenced to death, including juvenile offenders the report of the Defenders of Human Rights follows:

##### A. Juvenile Executions

- 1) While the implementation of the execution sentence of Amir Khaleghi, who committed a crime while he was still a juvenile, was postponed for two months, the execution sentence of Malagol Hassan a 21 year old who had committed a crime while still a juvenile was carried out. Ahmad Zareie, who had committed murder at the age of 17, was executed after serving 6 years in prison.
- 2) Approximately 150 lawyers who are members of the Bar Association of the Capital, in an open letter addressed to Ayatollah Shahroudi, the head of the Judiciary, urged him to provide appropriate strategies so that in the first possible opportunity the practice of hanging those who commit crimes while still under the age of 18 comes to an end.

##### B. Other Cases

1) The prosecutor of Kermanshah confirmed news reports stating that 10 people in that city were executed. On the 12th and 13th of February (30th of Bahman and 1st of Esfand) 10 persons in the cities of Ahvaz, Sari, Isfahan and Bushehr were executed. One of those executed was Abdullah Farivar, who was sentenced in 2004 to death by stoning. After the courts in Sari changed his sentence from execution by stoning to execution by hanging he was hanged in the prison in the city of Sari. According to official reports by Judiciary officials executions have been carried out as follows: four persons in Arak, 9 persons in Yaz, 9 persons in Isfahan, one person in Karaj, 19 persons in Tehran, 6 persons in Bojnourd, 4 persons in Mashad, one person in Kazeroun, 3 persons in Ahvaz, one person in Bushehr, one person in Sari and 10 persons in Kermanshah. In a press conference, Alireza Jamshidi, the spokesperson for the Judiciary, confirmed that three persons were stoned to death in Mashad. Masoumeh Gholechehi, a 32 year old woman who was sentenced to death 12 years ago and had been in prison for that time, was hanged. Four prisoners in the central prison of Sanandaj, Hassan Amjadi, Amin Dastgerdi, Arash Golpiran, Hamid Fazeli, were hanged.

2) The suggestion of Ayatollah Hashemi Shahroudi, the head of the Judiciary, asking for a pardon for Ashraf "F" who has been sentenced to death by stoning, was denied by the Judiciary's Commission on Exoneration.

3) The sentence of death by hanging of Shouresh Mahdkhani, was upheld in appeals court in the province of Kurdistan. Zeynab Jalilian, 27, of the village of Makoo in West Azarbaijan province, was sentenced to execution by hanging.

#### VI. The situation of religious minorities

The pressures on religious minorities have been very prevalent over these past months. Some of these pressures have been included in this report as follows:

- 1) Mamousta Seyfollah Hosseini, the prayer leader of Khatam ol-Anbia Mosque in Javanrood, and Mamousta Hossein Hosseini, the prayer leader of Seyed ol-shohad Hamze in Javanrood, were arrested.
- 2) According to reports received by the DHRC, ten members of the Quranic studies institute in Bookan by the names of: Ibrahim Ismailpour, Ali Rasool Nejad, Ismail Adib Hessami, Khalid Khodakarami, Nasser Hajpirooti, Nader Bayazdi, Mohammad Karimi, Mostafa Naderi, Taher Karimi, and Hossein Shaverdi, were summoned for the second time and after trials each were sentenced to 91 days of mandatory imprisonment.
- 3) Judge Hadad, the Assistant Security Prosecutor of Tehran, reported that he sent the cases pending against 7 members of the Bahai's (known as the accused leaders of Baha'i organization's case) to the Revolutionary Courts.
- 4) Taraneh Sanai'i, Shahnaz Saadati, Emelia Fanaian, Anisa Fanaian, and Farzaneh Ahmad Zadegan four members of the Bahai'i faith in Mazandaran and Nima Hagher in Tehran, Sima Eshraghi and Jalayer Vahdat in Mashad were arrested. Additionally, ten family members of Bahai's in Tehran were arrested.
- 5) Sahba Rezvani a female follower of the Bahai faith was sentenced to three years and eight months mandatory prison term.
- 6) The cemetery of the Bahai's in Ghaemshahr was vandalized.
- 7) Ghorbanali Dori Najaf Abadi, the Head Prosecutor of Iran, in a letter to Gholamhossein Ejeeyee, the Minister of Intelligence, announced that official activities by Bahai's were banned and requested that actions be taken against their organizations. In response the International Bahai community wrote an open letter addressed to Dori Najaf Abadi. A group of congressional members in the US also submitted a draft proposal for a resolution against the crackdown on Bahai's in Iran, to the US congress.
- 8) Hamid Badri and Sheikh Morad Badri, from the village of Darake, in the Gahvar area, originally from Karand City in West Kermanshah, along with two others named Manoochehr Moradi and Seyed Kiomars Zolfaghari from Tanoureh village, all four Kurdish minorities and followers of the "Yarsan" faith were arrested.
- 9) The protest gathering of the Gonabad Darvishes in Tehran, which aimed to object to the destruction of their religious buildings and the pressures on their members, was prevented from taking place. In the recent incident designed to prevent the protest gathering 67 members of this sect were arrested. Also, in Isfahan the Nematollahi Gonabadi Darvish members had problems holding their prayer meetings and conflicts at their prayer houses were reported. On the other hand, Abdulreza Goodarzi, Hadi Habibi, and Roya Asadpour, members of the Nematollahi Gonabadi Darvish Sect were arrested in Kish Island. One of the children of those arrested was also arrested after going to Kish Island to follow-up on the situation of his father.
- 10) Hossein Karimi, 27, a Farsi speaking Christian from Karaj was arrested. Hamik Khachikian, 51, a leader of the Farsi language church, in central Tehran as well as a couple by names of Nadereh Jamali, 44, and Jamal Ghali Shoorani 49, were also arrested.

#### Part Two—Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Given that the government of Iran is a signatory to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and in accordance with this international agreement it is obliged to work toward and adopt measures designed to ensure equality between citizens and work to promote the welfare of all citizens. Despite this, few indicators, whether economic, social or cultural, with respect to the living standards of Iranians, paint a positive picture of their current situation. The pressures placed on cultural and workers rights activists in the winter of 2008-2009 are as follows:

First: The situation of Teachers

##### A. Arrests

A group of teachers active in teachers' unions gathered in front of the Parliament on December 31, 2008 to inquire about the reason for lack of implementation of the law on National Management of Public Services and were arrested by the Police.

##### B. Court Sentences

1) The flogging sentence of Reza Abdi, a member of the Teacher's Union was carried out.

##### C. Other Cases

According to reports from the Teacher's Union on the 22 February, 2009 many teachers in the cities of Shiraz and Khomeini Shahr went on strike to demand an increase in pay and to protest the lack of response to their demands of 2007 and 2008. Also, a group of contract teachers, from various provinces with the aim of following up with their demands and in pursuit of their rights and pay came to Tehran to stage a protest in front of the Parliament. These teachers had drafted a letter to their MPs, in which they complained about the minimal compensation they receive for their contractual work and their unclear hiring status. On 19 January, 2009 at 10:00am a group of retired teachers staged a protest in District 2 of the Education Department in Ardebil demanding that their



requests be followed up by officials.

#### Two: The Situation of Workers and Farmers

Not being paid in the last few months of the Iranian Year was one of the most important problems faced by workers in Iran, which resulted in protests and strikes. On the other hand a number of factories, suffering from economic recession and a high volume of imports were forced to shut down operation and dismiss their workers. For example in industrial cities such as Qazvin and Saveh a number of factory workers were dismissed, their contracts were not renewed, or the factories themselves were shut down. The demand for unpaid back pay was another problem faced by workers.

#### A. Arrests

Ali Nejati, head of the workers syndicate of Haft Tapeh Sugar and Reza Rakhshan its director of public relations and Ali Akbar Pirhadi one of the officers at Vahed Syndicate Bus Company of Tehran were arrested.

#### B. Court Sentences

Branch 101 of the criminal court of Nazloo, sentenced Saliman Ibrahimy, Mohammad Samadzadeh, Morteza Jafari, Allahverdi Aslani, Mohammad Manafzadeh, Ayoub Azizpour, Akbar Rostami, Me'raj Alipour, Saeid Jafarpour, Majid Gholizadeh and Ziad Jafarpour to two years mandatory prison and year of exile to the city of Minab and 74 floggings. Additionally, Barzad Nezami Afshar, Meghdad Nezami Afsahr, Mohammad Ashrafi were sentenced to six months and two days of mandatory prison sentence. The courts also sentenced Heydar Ali Alipour, Hossein Vahabzadeh, Saliman Ahmadi, Habibollah Ahmadi and Mohammad Jafari to pay fines in the amount of 300,000 Tomans (roughly \$300) and Hojat Karimi to a fine of 200,000 Tomans (roughly \$200). These are from among 25 farmers of Sunni Faith from the village of Ghizil Khaneh Ye (Khaneghah Sorkh—Sorkh Prayerhouse) in Urumieh who were arrested after they staged a protest objecting the change in direction in the routes of underground waters.

#### C. Other Cases

1) According to published reports workers at "Kish" lumber" have not been paid for four-six months; workers at Mazandaran Textiles have not been paid for two months; workers at Coal Stone of "Danboo" have not been paid for three months; workers at "Shaneh Vari" Mines of Qazvin have not been paid for three months; workers at "Azam" leather have not been paid for three months; workers at "Gostar" power plant have not been paid for two months; workers at "Sanate Emrooz" have not been paid for one month; workers at "Saraan" factory have not been paid for 5 to 6 months; workers at Iran "Termeh" and at Tehran blankets have not been paid for a year; and workers at the Industrial Sugar Project at "Haft Tapeh" have not been paid for 2 months. The staff at the Medical Sciences University of Mazandaran have also not been paid.

2) The "Ghonche" Cooking Oil factory, "Mina" China factory, "Azmayesh" Refrigerator of Marvdasht, and Pipeline of Ahvaz factory shut down their operations. The situation of textile factories too is reportedly very poor.

3) Staff at Mehr Hospital in Sari went on strike. A group of workers at Pars Carpet protested in front of the Parliament. Also a group of workers from sugar factories in Khuzestan protested in front of the parliament. Additionally the workers at "Samiko" Industries protested in front of the governor's offices when the Minister of Labor visited Hamedan.

Municipality workers of the city of Abadan protested after not having been paid for four months. Over 150 retired employees of the social welfare organization protested in front of the Parliament. These workers were demanding that their retirement wages be brought in line with national standards for retirement wages. Workers at the Metal Industry Company held a protest in front of the offices of the President. A number of employees of the Industrial Complex of Northwestern Tabriz (auto parts producers) following lack of cash flow, unpaid wages, lack of insurance coverage and lack of attention to health and safety standards for workers, held a protest at the factory and went on strike.

4) Two thousand employees of Ahvaz Pipelines were fired. After the closure of Alvand Hospital, 250 employees, who had worked at the hospital for 10-12 years lost their jobs. The two companies "Tizro" and "Shahid Mottahari" in Qazvin laid off 270 employees. Fifty five workers of "Taar Iran" were also laid off. One hundred workers at "Azmayesh" workers in the city of Marvdasht were laid off after their contracts came to a close.

5) As the New Year and the time to decide on the yearly increase in the rate of wages approached, a number of workers unions in the province of Qazvin in a letter addressed to the High Council on Employment requested that the Council take a more proactive approach with respect to the issue of worker's wages.

6) Following the decision to set the minimum wage of workers at 2,745,000 Tomans (approximately \$2800) per Annum for the year 1388 (2009) and the objection to this issue by a number of workers who issued a petition, the Syndicate of the Vahed Company Bus Workers of Tehran and Surrounding areas, the Azad Worker's Union of Iran and the Trade Union of Electric and Metal Workers of Kermanshah took a similar stance on the wage rate as that expressed in the petition. These unions announced that the minimum yearly wage set for 2009, undermined the human dignity of workers and condemned their families to a gradual death by hunger. While objecting to the decision to set such a low yearly wage for workers, the unions announced that workers had the right to object to this wage and demand a serious reconsideration of the decision. The Unions further invited all workers, teachers, nurses and other citizens to sign the protest petition initiated by workers.

7) Contradictory stats with respect to unemployment rates have been reported. In late January 2009 the Head of the Center for Statistics in Iran had insisted on the accuracy of a 9.5% rate of unemployment, but the Minister of Work and Social Programs announced that the rate is actually higher than 10.5%.

8) A young woman suffering from psychological problems committed suicide in the Navab Metro station. Another young woman at the Hassan Abad Metro Station attempted suicide, but was unsuccessful since the train operator managed to stop the train in time. On the 22nd February, 2009 a youth who identified himself from Kangavar set fire to himself in front of the Tehran University Library. On February 14, 2009 a man of approximately 50 years of age, went to the street adjacent to the Parliament and set himself ablaze. On 18 February 2009 another individual from Khoramabad set himself on fire in front of the office building of the Martyr's Foundation. On the 27th of January, 2009 a man from Bam, who had suffered due to the earthquake in that city, set himself on fire in front of the Office of the President.

9) According to reports from Robat Karim city, a woman along with her children, was forced out of the home in which she had lived for 25 years. The home had been provided to her by the foundation of the "Mostazaafan" (underprivileged).

10) The International Confederation of Workers Unions and the World Federation of Transportation Workers protested the continued legal cases and pressures brought against five leaders of the "Haft Tappeh" Sugar Workers Union.

11) Mansour Osanloo was prevented from taking leave from prison to attend the wedding of his child. Osanloo was also given an award by the Dutch National Workers Trade Unions.

12) Julia Sosa, the Secretary of the Argentinean Syndicate wrote a letter to President Ahmadinejad, expressing that workers rights and human rights activists around the world were concerned about the news of the arrest of Ibrahim Madadi, the Deputy Chair of the Vahed Syndicate of Bus Drivers. Portions of this statement read: "This is not the first time that Iranian officials have taken unjust measures against workers unions during the Christmas holidays. Less than one week ago, Mohsen Hakimi, member of the Coordinating Committee for the Establishment of Workers Unions and Bijan Amiri a worker from Pars Automobile Factory were arrested by secret police. Without a doubt the Iranian government is aware of the International objections with respect to its refusal to abide by its obligations within the framework of ILO, such as allowing workers the freedom to establish unions and the right to enter into collective bargaining and collective contracts. We urge the Iranian government to unconditionally release, Ibrahim Madadi, Mohsen Hakimi, Bijan Amiri, Mansour Osanloo and Farzad Kamangar." Also the Confederation of Railroad Workers of Japan, The Transportation Union Workers of America, the Transport Union of Austria, and the Workers National Confederation of England, issued statements condemning the arrest of Ibrahim Madadi, and urged Iranian authorities to unconditionally release Madadi as well as other detained workers rights activists.

### Three: Cultural Heritage and the Environment

1) Experts believe that the thousand year old Jame' Mosque of Isfahan which is the most important historic mosque of Iran and has been dubbed as the "convergence of Iranian and Islamic Architecture" is suffering from gradual destruction. Likewise all the historically and culturally significant artifacts and sites in Isfahan are faced with the threat of destruction because of excessive humidity resulting from the gathering of water and drainage problems of Zayandeh Roud and excessive use of well water in the city of Isfahan.

2) Some reports indicate that theft of historical artifacts at Persopolis has occurred.

3) Some news reports indicate that the beautiful and unique surroundings of the city of Kazeroon have come under the assault of trucks seeking to construct roads. Additionally after four months following the outbreak of deathly disease in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, which has resulted in the death of hundreds of tons of fish, the loss of fish life continues in these waters. According to environmental experts, the pollution in the Persian Gulf resulting for increased levels of Nitrate and Phosphate as well as the dumping of sewage in the waters, continues to worsen the situation and is one of the leading reasons for the continuation of the problem. Still tons of sewage waste is dumped into these waters from Iranian coastal cities alone on a daily basis, including sewage waste from Bandar Abbas. The continued dumping of sewage in these waters can lead to further loss of life of fish and greater pollution in these waters. Additionally, during the transport of several heads of goats from protected lands in the Province of Hamedan to another location in the same province, died after they were shot with anesthetics by officials from the Department of the Environment. Additionally, Salamandars from Lorestan are reportedly endangered.

4) While in Tehran the worsening air quality and air pollution has receive a great deal of press, other worrisome news in this respect has also been reported. Reportedly the drinking water in Tehran and several other megacities is polluted with Nitrate, which is worrisome news indeed. The numbers of those suffering from breathing ailments in Tehran has increased by 60 percent.

5) A member of the Committee to Reform Driving Behavior reported that nationally one person loses their life every 25 minutes on the roads as a result of driving accidents.

### Conclusion:

The Defenders of Human Rights Center, despite being under extreme pressure to cease its activities, once again expresses its belief in the fundamental rights of humans and respect and value for individuals. As such, the Defenders of Human Rights Center urges lawmakers, those charged with implementing the laws and those responsible for providing oversight for their implementation to ensure that laws are implemented in the best possible manner. The DHRC further urges officials to carry out their responsibilities in accordance with the constitution and in line with the obligations of the country outlined in human rights treaties to which Iran is a signatory. Additionally, the DHRC reminds officials that the country's national interest and progress are linked to the appropriate implementation of laws and the observance of fundamental freedoms and the rights of individuals. Along these lines, the Defenders

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of Human Rights Center expresses its protest with respect to the pressures placed on civil activities, demands that appropriate steps be taken to prevent the violation of the rights of citizens and measures be adopted to address and reduce existing tensions between political, cultural and social activists and government officials. We further remind judicial officials of their obligations to ensure due process and police and security officials of their obligations to abide by fair prosecuting standards, and we strongly demand the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience and political prisoners.





















