



Witness Statement of Majid Tamjidi

Name: Majid Tamjidi
Place of Birth: Qazvin, Iran
Date of Birth: 23 September 1974
Occupation: Former Supervisor at Apadana Ceram Co., labor union activist

Interviewing Organization: Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC)

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Interviewer: IHRDC Staff

This statement was prepared pursuant to an interview with Majid Tamjidi. It was approved by Majid Tamjidi on June 11, 2013. There are 49 paragraphs in the statement.

The views and opinions of the witness expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center.

Statement

Background

1. I am Majid Tamjidi. I was born in Qazvin and am 37 years old. I was also a resident of Qazvin. The last job I had in Iran was at Apadana Ceram Co.—the largest producer of ceramics in the Middle East—in the Rakhsh Pakan unit, where I was the supervisor. I left Iran on December 25, 2011. The reason I left Iran was because I was summoned once again to the Intelligence Ministry, and accused of supporting political prisoners. Generally I am not a political person but I am also not a type of person who can tolerate coercion.
2. Before 2009—that is during the first four-year term of Ahmadinejad's presidency—the [economic] conditions were not as disastrous as they are now. But in February-March 2009, Apadana Ceram Co., the largest producer of ceramics in the Middle East, had not paid the salary of workers, including myself, for a few months.
3. One day in late February 2009 I told the workers, "I, as your supervisor, will not get into uniform today and anyone who wants can stand with me." The workers said, "Mr. Tamjidi, they will fire us." I said, "If they fire us, we will all leave, and at least we will be able to get what is rightfully ours." They said, "If you don't abandon us, we will also be with you." I was in the unit where 60 to 65 people were under my supervision and on that day none of us changed clothes.
4. At 10 in the morning, [personnel] from the factory's security office came and told us to go back to work or else we would be fired. The workers said they would not go to work and again we waited. The factory manager Mr. Mehdizadeh came and said, "Mr. Tamjidi you are a senior employee and you should not be doing this." I said, "I am no different than the others and I have not been paid for three months. These workers have also not been paid. My salary may be higher but I am also protesting and I am no different." They [the factory management] wanted to pay my salary. I said, "I have told these workers not to go to work and now I cannot accept a salary while I know that one of the workers is expecting a child and another has to pay rent but none of them have money to pay [their bills]." In any case they made promises to cooperate and they followed through with it. But three days later I was summoned to the factory security office and given a stern warning. I was also suspended for a week. Then they warned me [against repeating these actions] and I returned to work again.
5. This affair continued until close to the presidential elections in 2009. I was active in [Mir Hossein] Mousavi's election campaign office [in Qazvin]. We closely cooperated with the staff in Tehran until the elections when that big fraud took place.¹ I insist that fraud took place because at 11:30 at night the staff at the Interior Ministry told me by phone that Ahmadinejad had been elected. That means an hour and a half before ballot boxes (polling stations) had been closed. And that was impossible.
6. In any case, communications [between Qazvin and Tehran] began on the following day. On June 16, 2009 I was present in all the gatherings in Tehran. And when I went to (work at) the company I would tell the (pro-) Green Movement workers what had happened in Tehran. For instance on July 9, 2009 [the anniversary of the attack of governmental forces on a Tehran university dorm in 1999] or December 7, 2009 [Student's Day] or on the day of Ashoura [a religious holiday in Islam] - we issued calls for action and participated in gatherings. During this entire time I was under surveillance by the company security office but I was completely unaware of it.

¹ By "big fraud" the witness is referring to the 2009 presidential election vote that many critics alleged to be stolen.

7. The last gathering I attended was in 2010 on the anniversary of the June 16, 2009, incident.² I came to Tehran along with a few of my friends. One of them was Vahid Rouhbakhsh who was a university student. There was a tight security atmosphere in Tehran. We then returned to Qazvin and coordinated with friends in Tehran to attend the grave of Neda Agha Soltan³ on the anniversary of her death on June 21, 2009.
8. On June 20, 2009 at 10:30 in the morning, I was at work when I got a phone call from the company's executive manager Mr. Mehdizadeh, a very nice person and a friend of mine, [telling me] to come to his office. He told me the company's security office had asked for my file. I knew what the story was about but I told him not to worry. I would go and see what they wanted. Two hours later he called me again and said, "Come down Majid." I went to him and he said the factory management had now asked for my file. I returned to my unit again.
9. Other than my job at the company I had a wedding filming and photography business. So whenever I went to Tehran I filmed lots of scenes from ceremonies with a pen which was brought for me from America. It had a camera on its head which I used to film with. But I never sent them (the clips) anywhere. My only intention was to create an archive so that I could exhibit them one day when the regime is overturned. I was only interested in the artistic aspect. I had saved all these clips in flash files and kept them at home. I always carried this pen with me.
10. When I returned to my unit I had a series of clips on my mobile phone. I deleted them and took out my mobile SIM card and gave it to a worker I trusted. Meanwhile I was supposed to go to Tehran the next day, on June 21, 2009, along with my friend Vahid Rouhbakhsh. He worked at the Paknam company which was located right across the street from our company. I tried to contact him but he would not respond. This worried me more. Why wasn't Vahid responding? Why was I summoned to the company security office? I was anxious until 4 in the afternoon and then I went home with the car service.

Arrest

11. At 5 in the afternoon on June 20, 2009 my house bell rang. I went downstairs and saw five people enter our house. They asked if I was Mr. Tamjidi. I said that's me. [One of the men] said we have a warrant for your arrest and permission to search your home. I said where is the warrant? He put his hand inside his pocket and took out a piece of paper and then put it back in his pocket. I said I am not a scanner to be able to catch it so fast; I have to read it. He took out the piece of paper again and put his hand on a name. I saw that it was from the Prosecutor General's office. It had my name and Vahid Rouhbakhsh's and a third name which until this day I was not able to recognize because they only arrested me and Vahid.
12. Their leader was a fat man of medium height who was about 45 or 46 years old. He was bald and had a fair, or you could say a reddish, face and wore glasses. They came inside in a very brute manner. One of them went downstairs, one went on the roof and the three others came inside the house. They all had plain clothes and started to carry out a search. I should say that I had been to the hospital ten days prior because I had suffered a heart attack. Now my heart was seizing again and my wife brought my medicine.

² "Iran: 12 students reported killed in crackdown after violent clashes", Guardian, June 15, 2009, *available at*: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/15/iran-students-protest-election-results>

³ "Iran doctor tells of Neda's death", BBC World, June 25, 2009, *available at*: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8119713.stm

13. They began to search the house. The closet, the computer case, laptop; they began to collect everything. One of the men wanted to enter the bedroom and he saw there were pictures of my wife in the room so he was a bit more respectful. He closed the door and told my wife, "Please Ms., go and collect your pictures." I was very happy because the flash memory was behind the photo frame but unfortunately when my wife came and said she had collected the pictures, I saw that she had collected all except the frame that had my picture with the flash memory behind it. When I saw that, I sat on the floor and my heart was really seizing because I had a lot of data in that flash memory.
14. That man said, "Where is your equipment?" I said it is under the bed. They pulled the bed to the side and there were lots of books and handwritten papers and some Mousavi campaign flyers [for the 2009 presidential elections] and such things. They took them all. In any case they gathered my things and when my father asked what had happened they treated him very badly. They went on the roof top and dismantled my satellite dishes.
15. So in short, they collected everything and I waited in their car. When they drove out of our alley and turned into the street, they blindfolded me. I must say that when they noticed I was feeling bad in the house and had suffered a heart attack they themselves sent a wireless message [on their walkie-talkies] for the doctor to be ready. When we arrived at the detention center, the location of which I was not sure of, one of the doctors examined me and gave them the necessary directions.
16. The next day they took me for an interrogation and said, "Tell us which gatherings were you at?" I said, "What do you mean by gatherings?" I denied everything. [My interrogator] put a thick file in front of me and said it contained prints of six months' of telephone [conversations]. Other than my two phone lines, they had also tapped the house phone and the phones lines of my wife and my mother. I still denied everything and then they began to beat me. Then they said they had arrested my friend Vahid Rouhbakhsh as well and he had told them everything and had said we had been in all the gatherings.
17. They kept me in that detention center for three days. They only beat me on the second day and on the third day they did not do anything to me and they behaved well. I did accept that I had gone to Tehran on June 21, 2009 and February 11, 2010. I only accepted these two cases. During the three days [in the detention center] I was allowed to contact my family two times to say I was well and not to worry.
18. On the third day they put blindfolds on me again and put me inside a Samand car and took me to Prosecutor Shafiei at Section 10 of the prosecutor's office in Qazvin. He told me, "Can you post bail?" I said, "Yes. Make a call and ask [my family] to bring it." He said okay and told me to go outside and I went outside. Then I suddenly noticed he had assigned my case to be sent to the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. Even the intelligence agent was surprised. I heard it with my own ears that the intelligence agent told his boss, "This jackass assigned it to Tehran."

Ward 209, Evin Prison

19. In June 22, 2010 they sent me along with Vahid Rouhbakhsh to the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in a dark green Peugeot 405. We went to the Revolutionary Court in Tehran but they did not accept us. They said, "Where do you think this is? Your aunt's house? Why did you bring a suspect from Qazvin?" Then they made lots of calls here and there and they took us to Evin. Eventually at one or two in the afternoon they took us to Evin's Ward 209.

20. Before we went inside we handed over our clothes and put on blue prison uniforms and they took our picture and the doctor examined us and I told him about my heart problems. After that I did not see Vahid and they took me to cell number 113 in Ward 209. I was in that cell by myself for 50 days.
21. In cell number 111 next to mine there were the two American mountain climbers. They had learned a bit of Persian and we spoke to one another. I noticed someone with a foreign accent asking, "Did they bring you just now?" I was not familiar with the situation there and I said, "Where are you speaking from?" He said, "I am in the cell next to yours." The he said, "When did they bring you?" I said, "Yesterday." He said, "I have been here for 11 months." I said, "Are you that mountain climber?" He said, "Yes, we are those three mountain climbers."⁴ That was the limit of our conversation and suddenly a guard came in and gave me a beating but he did not do anything to them. Even when they were mistreated they would start shouting in Persian and sometimes in English and would raise hell in the cell. They did not put blindfolds on them. I mean when they would take me for interrogations I could see that they were in the walkway and did not have blindfolds.
22. My interrogations began on the third day. My first interrogation did not last five minutes and my last one lasted nine and a half hours.
23. My first interrogation lasted five minutes because he asked me to explain my connection with the Mojahedin organization [MEK]. I put down my pen and said I did not have any response to that question. He said, "Look! I will go and come back in a month." I said, "Go and come back ten years later. I do not have any connections with this organization." Then he called the guard to take me [back to my cell]. The next day they took me for interrogation again. The interrogator came and said, "Have you done your thinking?" I said, "The month passed so quickly!" And he started to hit me and said, "You have a lot of nerve." After beating me a whole lot but with me still not accepting that accusation, he said, "Okay, write down that you do not have any connection (with the Mojahedin)." He did not believe in anything. He said he himself was God and the Prophet and he would curse all he wanted.
24. Most of the time when they wanted to beat me they would take me blindfolded to the floor below Ward 209. During one of the beatings they hanged me by my hands and my shoulder dislocated. They beat me with plastic hoses. One day I took off my blindfold and saw my interrogator who was a man around 41 or 42 years old who had shaved his beard and mustache with a six-blade⁵ and had salt and pepper hair. He was neither thin nor fat and was about 5.90 foot tall. He wore a ring with a black stone. He beat me a lot.
25. During the time I was in Ward 209 I had no news from my family for ten days. In order to crush me, my interrogator said my father had suffered a stroke I smirked and said, "You are bluffing." He said, "You can smirk all you want. I will bring him here in that condition." Then he took me somewhere where I was able to make a 30-second phone call and unfortunately I found out that my father had suffered a stroke. The interrogators tried hard to use this against me.
26. Before my detention one of our plans [of me and the guys in Tehran] was that we made an agreement with some of the guys in Tehran that if they had any photos, film or anything else

⁴ "Three American detainees are freelance journalists", Denverpost, August 4, 2009, *available at*:

http://www.denverpost.com/search/ci_12986499

⁵ In reference to a shave with a razor with six blades, which guarantees a very close shave, or in this case that he has no, or very little, facial hair.

regarding attacks and arrests, we would collect them all and I would edit them into a small clip. I had agreed to burn 50,000 CDs out of my own pocket and give them to friends so that they would distribute them in people's homes to those who do not have satellite dishes, and for whom their only [media] source in all their life had been state TV, could see the truth. Now the interrogators were looking for those I was in contact with in Tehran.

27. The interesting thing was that my interrogator said, "You have insulted the president." I said, "No." Then he read out a conversation between my wife and I. When I was in Tehran on February 11, 2010, my wife had called me. The interrogator read the same sentences from the phone conversation so that I would get messed up: "Hi my dear, are you well? and... then your wife said, 'Hasn't it ended yet?' and you said, 'No, he's still yapping'." I said, "Where is the insult?" He said, "At that moment only Ahmadinejad was talking."
28. In any case, after somewhere around 30 to 37 interrogation sessions, the interrogator had not gotten a signature from me for my statements until the last interrogation. It took me three hours just to sign interrogation papers because during the interrogations he would only ask me to write and waited until the last day for me to sign my responses. I signed maybe more than 100 or 150 pages.
29. After 50 days they took me to a room called Public 10. There were 14-15 of us in that room. There were two Al-Qaeda guys who were originally Kurd from Bukan in Iran, two Iraqi Kurds, and most of those in the room were accused of white-collar financial crimes, like Akbar Bahrami and Habib Shamsi. I was the only Green Movement person. I was in this room for ten days.
30. Two months after my detention, on August 29, 2010 I was released on bail after my family paid 100 million tomans [approximately US \$100,000 in 2010]. The day I was freed I saw Vahid Rouhbakhsh was freed as well. We were both freed on the same day. When I got home and saw that my father could barely move [because of the stroke], it was a severe blow and very painful for me. I found out that after my detention my father had made some enquiries and once they had told him on the phone that "your child has killed a person and we want to execute him." Right then my father fell and had a stroke.
31. After two months agents contacted me again by phone and said I should go to Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court on a certain day. I went to get a lawyer but 90 percent of them refused [to represent me]. One or two agreed but I could not afford to pay the fee. For this reason I went before [Judge] Mr. Salavati at Branch 15 without a lawyer. Mr. Salavati⁶ is an ugly looking heavy-set person who shaves his beard and mustache. He has large eyes with an angry look, according to himself. He is a very rude person, and so scared that he even goes to court with two bodyguards. His bodyguard always sits in front of his room.
32. They leveled five charges against me: organizing gatherings and colluding against the security of the country, insulting the president, insulting the leader, disturbing public order, and the possession and use of satellite equipment. I objected and said I do not accept [the charges]. He was rude and told me to shut up. I said, "I don't expect anything from a judge who speaks this way." I threw the piece of paper and said, "Issue whatever verdict you wish." He said, "Then get lost and get out." I came out. This was my trial which lasted five minutes. Vahid Rouhbakhsh was also put on trial on the same day.

⁶ "Iran's Hanging Judge", Institute For War & Peace Reporting, June 9, 2010, available at: <http://iwpr.net/report-news/irans-hanging-judge>

33. A month and a half later they called again and said I should come; my verdict had been issued. I went to Tehran again with Vahid. They condemned each of us to three years in prison. Three years for acting against national security and possession of satellite equipment but because of lack of evidence we were cleared of charges of insulting the president, insulting the leader and disturbing public order.
34. I wrote a letter and said I may not be a highly-educated person but how could it be that you don't have evidence or documents regarding disturbing public order and I am exonerated of that charge but you have evidence regarding gathering and collusion? If someone has been in a gathering he must have acted against public order as well, so what gives? In any case I wrote my objection and a week later added it to my appeal and it went to Judge Zargar at the 36th Branch of the Court of Appeals. In the Court of Appeals our sentence was reduced to 1.5 years in prison and a 300,000 toman [approximately US \$ 300 in 2010] fine. After that Vahid did not go to prison and was smuggled out of Iran.

Ward 350, Evin Prison

35. On February 8, 2011, I was summoned to Evin by phone. I collected my belongings because I knew I had to go to prison for a year and a half to serve my sentence. On February 8th I said good-bye to my family and saw my father for the last time and entered prison.
36. I went directly to room one of Ward 350. The late Saber⁷ was in this room, as well as Amir Khosrow Delir-Sani⁸ and Mohammad Davari⁹. I was there for about two months. Then room five was set up and I was put in charge of that room and spent the rest of my sentence there until I was freed after 10 months.
37. Since it was unbearable to eat prison food, and they would not give us [red] meat, chicken or fruit, we had to obtain them ourselves. There were channels inside the prison which we were aware of and we knew who they were and we had connections with them. They helped those in prison who had financial needs. For instance they would put money into my account and a few others who were in charge of the rooms so that we would provide for those whose families did not give them money. We would bring these needy people into our colony. The colony was the name for groups of five or ten people where we would share expenses.
38. While in prison I suffered a heart attack. The reason was mainly stress and anxiety about my wife and child, the mortgage, checks, debts, and such. And my father could no longer talk and he was not able to come from Qazvin to Evin to see me. It was 10:30 at night when I suffered a heart attack. They took me to the clinic and checked my pulse and they realized that I was in bad shape. It took two hours until the necessary permits were issued and they were then allowed to take me to the hospital. The doctor prescribed an exercise test but I was not taken to the hospital any more. Until the late Saber passed away and after that out of fear they opened up hospital transfers.
39. In my life I had not seen a man as great as Saber. I am very happy that I entered Evin prison [in the respect that] it was interesting to meet people I had heard about from afar or for whom I had read their books. The late Saber was always joyful. He was extremely humble, down to earth and

⁷ "Jailed Iran activist Hoda Saber dies on hunger strike", BBC, June 12, 2011, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13741374>

⁸ "Amir Khosrow Dalirsani Sentenced to Four Years In Prison", HRANA, May 18, 2010, available at: <https://hira-news.org/en/amir-khosrow-dalirsani-sentenced-to-four-years-in-prison>

⁹ "Mohammad Davari, Iran", CPJ, available at: <http://cpj.org/awards/2010/mohammad-davari.php>

knowledgeable. He was one of the nationalist religious guys.

40. It is interesting that Ward 305 had two floors. The room doors were always open and we could go up or down the floors until nine at night when the lights were turned off. At nine o'clock only the entrance doors were shut but the room doors were still kept open. We could come and go into the rooms until morning.
41. After the death of the great (Ezzatollah) Sahabi¹⁰ and his daughter (Haleh)¹¹, Mr. Saber and Mr. Amir Khosrow Delir-Sani went on hunger strike. I remember when Mr. Saber heard about Haleh Sahabi's death in the morning. He began walking barefoot in the yard of Evin's Ward 350 in the hot month of June. When the call to prayer was sounded at noon, he stood alone in the middle of the yard and did his prayer. He started his hunger strike right then. The late Saber had a very healthy body because his life in prison was divided into particular activities. He would wake up in the morning and do his walk and exercise and have his breakfast. Then he would go upstairs to study. At noon he would go for a walk again and do his prayer. He would rest and in the afternoon would do his exercise again. He was not an idle type of person. He was very fit and a sportsman.
42. One night at 10:30, 17-18 days after he started his hunger strike, I saw that Saber was in bad shape. He grabbed his heart. It was during lights off, so we pressed the call button and the officer guard came down and took [Saber] to Evin's clinic. When he came back an hour and a half later, I saw that his face was red. He had been beaten.
43. He said, "They took me to the clinic and they said you are pretending and lying. I objected and they hit me." When he was recalling this he got sick again. We pressed the call button again and they came and took him and the next day they told us he had died.
44. Two days after Saber's death I had an appointment at Modarres Hospital in Tehran for an exercise test. Prison agents had told hospital staff that I was a swindler. One of the nurses said, "How much have you swindled that they had to bring you with your hands and feet tied?" I said, "Ladies and gentlemen, if anyone has said I'm a swindler it's nonsense I have been arrested after the 2009 elections. I am a Green Movement activist. They have brought me here because of my protests. Those who say I am here because of financial charges are completely lying." I also had handcuffs on. Then there was commotion in the emergency room and the prison guard showed up again. After that the doctors became friends with me. One time I asked one of the doctors what had happened to Saber. He said, "Majid, I will only tell you that Saber was brought to us when he had already passed away. He had had a heart attack but they brought him in too late."
45. One day when they were bringing me back from the hospital I saw my family, all wearing black and standing in front of the prison. I realized that my father had passed away. Prior to that I had written many times to Jafari Dowlatabadi [Tehran Prosecutor] that I don't want anything, I don't want furloughs, but just let me see my father for an hour under the supervision of an agent. But he had refused.
46. My father died during the month of Ramadan. On the afternoon of the day when I realized my father had died, they read the names of 20 to 25 people, including mine, to go to the Evin prosecutor's office. When we got there they asked us to write a repentance letter so that we would

¹⁰ "Ezzatollah Sahabi obituary", Guardian, June 30, 2011, available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/30/ezzatollah-sahabi-obituary>

¹¹ "Iran: Haleh Sahabi dies at funeral of Ezzatollah Sahabi", BBC, June 1, 2011, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13613032>

be freed on Eid al Fitr¹². There was a man sitting in the prosecutor's office. He said, "Take a piece of paper and write you made a mistake." I said, "I will not write such a thing." He said, "Get lost then." I came out of the room. I waited until the guys were done. Ninety percent of them had not agreed to repent.

47. After three days the document was prepared for my bail and I was allowed to go on furlough in the month of September 2011. I was able to attend the ceremony for the seventh day of my father's death. I was on furlough when two days before Eid al Fitr, the clerk at the office of Tehran's prosecutor, a respectable man by the name of Dehqan, gave me a call. Before, someone by the name of Mr. Afzali was the clerk for Jafari Dowlatabadi's office who was very much a dictator and a jerk. But after Dehqan came there, a lot of things had changed.
48. Mr. Dehqan said, "Mr. Tamjidi, it is not my job to do this and I shouldn't be doing this. But I know you have lost your father and you will come to extend your furlough. But the list of prisoners pardoned by the Leader has arrived and your name is on it. It's no longer necessary for you to come to the prison. Just go pay your fines." I said I had not written a repentance letter. He said, "Mr. Tamjidi, many like you have not repented either."
49. Two days later I went from Qazvin to Tehran and paid my fine. I had spent ten months of my sentence in prison when I was freed. I left Iran legally on December 25, 2011.

¹² The month of Ramadan, which is the Muslim fasting month, ends with a big feast called "Eid al Fitr".