

Annex II

Case summaries

Interviews from a selection of the meetings held by the Special Rapporteur during his December 2013 fact-finding mission in the Netherlands, Germany and France, or otherwise conducted during the reporting period for this report.

Hamid Ghassemi-Shall

Mr. Hamid Ghassemi-Shall - former prisoner / brother of prisoner, who allegedly died in detention.

In May 2008, Mr. Alborz Ghassemi-Shall, a retired Iranian army officer, was arrested by military police in Tehran while attempting to pick up his passport, as required by Iranian law for certain retired military officials. Twelve days later, his brother Mr. Hamid Ghassemi-Shall was also arrested at a military intelligence office while attempting to pick up his own passport, which had allegedly been seized upon his brother's arrest.

Both Alborz and Hamid were reportedly held in solitary confinement without access to a lawyer for 70 days at a military detention facility number 36 in downtown Tehran, at which point they were taken to an investigative judge. They were then allegedly returned to solitary confinement at the same facility, and only brought to trial at the Revolutionary Court's Branch 29 on 30 December 2008, a date eventually postponed to 29 April 2009 due to a procedural requirement by the judge assigned to the case. The brothers were reportedly only able to access a lawyer shortly before the trial, and to meet with their counsel for 15 minutes prior to the trial, which lasted a total of two hours. They were sentenced to death for alleged connections to the Mujahidin e- Khalq (MEK) Organization, although they were apparently not officially notified of this judgment until December of that year.

On 13 May 2009, both brothers were transferred to solitary confinement at Evin Prison, where they remained until 29 November 2009, when they were transferred to Ward 350 (Evin's general population ward for political prisoners).

On 19 December 2009, the brothers were reportedly transferred to the army's Intelligence center and offered sentence-reductions in exchange for apology letters. Mr. Alborz Ghassemi-Shall apparently suffered a panic attack and was taken to a military hospital from the site where they were to write the letters. He was released on 25 December 2010, but his health continued to deteriorate to the point that he could not see or walk by the end of January 2010. By this time, Evin officials confirmed that he suffered from a tumor in his stomach, but were allegedly not permitted by intelligence officials to release him to be treated outside of the prison. Mr. Alborz Ghassemi-Shall died in Evin Prison on 19 January 2010.

In November 2011, a representative of the Prosecutor's Office contacted Mr. Hamid Ghassemi-Shall in prison to inform him that he did not believe there was sufficient state evidence to implicate anyone in his family of the activities for which he was still serving prison time. After further intercession by an Intelligence officer and continued pressure from the official in the Prosecutor's office, Mr. Ghassemi-Shall was re-tried and given a new five-year sentence for espionage only, despite the fact that he had apparently been cleared of that particular charge already in 2008, during the investigative phase of his case. After further pressure from family members and officials, authorities agreed to count his first year in detention as prison time toward the new five-year sentence, such that he had

completed service of his sentence. He was released in September 2013 and returned to Canada, where he is a citizen and where he had lived prior to his arrest.

Mr. Hamid Ghassemi-Shall's conviction and sentence were apparently upheld three times by the Iranian Supreme Court before he was eventually granted a re-trial.

Yahsar Khamenei

Blogger

Mr. Yashar Khomeini worked for a satirical Facebook page which used religion to satirize the Iranian authorities' reported sensitivity to criticism of religion.

In May 2012, his family contacted him and told him that authorities threatened to take his father to prison if he did not cease his participation in the page. He did stop his involvement but his family told him that authorities took his father into custody anyway.

Mr. Khamenei's father was eventually "exonerated" of his son's "crime" of insulting Islam, but in October 2013, he found out that his father has been sentenced to jail for one year for possession of a bottle of alcohol, a satellite television, and pepper spray, for which he had a permit. (They had seized all of these items the first time they arrested him).

In November 2013, his father was summoned and he showed up and introduced himself, but the prison authorities told him he was free to go.

His father therefore remains in a state of quasi-semi legal limbo. Though he is exonerated from the original charge, it is clear that authorities continue to maintain a case against him.

Mohamed Ali Khalili

Human rights lawyer

Mr Ali Khalili was a lawyer in Iran with the Bar. He taught at University, and is also an expert on international law.

In one case he took on, there were several people who were arrested trying to defend Azerbaijani rights. They were arrested without due process and put in the hands of the Ministry of Information. Mr. Khalili took this case on and clashed with the judge on the case. His role was "only to ask that the rights of these individuals -- in accordance with Iranian law -- be respected."

He had to bring a procedural suit against the Prosecutor-General and judicial officials in Eastern Azerbaijan when he felt he was unable to do this due to his relationship with the judge on the case.

One morning in 2004, four people from the Ministry of Intelligence stormed his office and searched everything. They also seized laptops and other materials. They drove him to his house, where his wife (who had just given birth) was there with her mother. They told him to knock on the door, which he did, and he told his wife that he was there with an officer.

They said they wanted to search his apartment for "the drugs and alcohol that he uses." He denied using anything. He demanded a warrant and mentioned that he was a lawyer and knew his rights, but they ignored him.

They searched the house, took his computer and satellite dish, and took him to the office of the Ministry of Information. No official even asked for his name for 16 days while he was in detention.

On the sixteenth day, they asked him to hand over his identification documents, but he told them that authorities had seized it in the arrest. So they put him back in a car and took him to the Prosecutor's office. When they took him to that office, he was handcuffed on both sides of his body to two chairs, in what he believes was meant to be an embarrassing show.

He was handcuffed to a chair for 4-5 hours.

He was then taken into a courtroom and a judge arrived with a full list of documents and demanded that he sign it. Mr. Khalili said that he would not sign, because there was no warrant to arrest him, and because he didn't know the contents of the document. The judge said: "It doesn't matter, I will just write here that you refused to sign."

The judge decided he would be freed on bail for 200 million rials, but did not charge him. Mr. Ali Khalili said he would pay the bond in cash. The judge said: "In that case, sit down." It was clear to Mr. Khalili that he wanted to wait until the business day ended for banks, so that he would have to spend the night in prison.

He was taken to jail. While they asked for his fingerprints and identification, he asked the guards to tell him what he was charged with. They told him "illicit relations and forming a prostitution ring." Mr. Khalili points out that in Iran, when a person brings charges against a judge, they often counter-charge him personally with immorality charges.

Eventually, the Prosecutor's office accepted the bail payment. His colleagues warned him that authorities were compiling a list of charges against him and that he should leave the country. He left through the Turkish border and went to the UNHCR office in Van, where he registered. He was given an interview date by the UNHCR for a month from that time. During his time at a hotel there, he saw some suspicious people in the hotel. He wrote letters to the police in Van, and they called him back and told him they would arrange an interview in their office with him. One day after that, he was arrested by members of the Turkish police. In the car, there were also members of the Iranian Ministry of Information. He was taken back to Iran.

He was taken to Section 350 of Evin prison (controlled by the Revolutionary Guards) and was placed in solitary confinement for three months. They allegedly fed him food with hallucinogens, and he began to see things. Some of his friends, including Mr. Dadkhakh and Mr. Seif, "had the same experience" ("it's called white torture in Iran").

He was then transferred to the Revolutionary Guard Prison in Tabriz. When he was there he learned that he had already been charged with: "encouraging corruption and prostitution (1 year in prison), illicit prostitution (99 lashes), working as a spy, working against national security, and exchanging information with foreigners," which altogether constituted *Moharebeh* (enmity against God).

He was released based on a claim that he was mentally unstable.

Thereafter he had to prove that he was undergoing treatment at a psychiatric hospital. His file was sent to a chamber in the Supreme Court. During that time he would go to see a psychologist and report to the Branch of Legal Medicine so that he would not be re-arrested.

Meanwhile, authorities confiscated all of his belongings and blocked all of his bank accounts. He had been renting out apartments, and the renters arranged with the judiciary not to pay him. He took this case to court, but it was rejected.

He began writing letters to a human rights organization from internet cafes, but authorities tracked him and reinstated the execution order against him. He fled the country.

Ashraf Qurbani

Lawyer

Ms. Qurbani is the wife of Mr. Mohamed Ali Khalili.

She notes that lawyers have a lot of difficulty working in Iran, and they “would all tell you this.” They cannot defend their clients freely. Lawyers are always treated badly in the Prosecutors’ offices. When lawyers go into Prosecutors’ offices, their phones are seized, and their items are seized “as if they were criminals.”

Moreover, there is currently a bill in Iran meant to strip the Bar Association of “whatever independence it does have.”

There is one case, in Chamber 1 of the General Court in Tabriz, regarding a young woman named Azzam Malekpour. She has been in Tabriz Prison since 2012 without charge. She is the daughter of a man who owns a textile company. A few years back, her father gave a check as a loan payment, but the amount bounced. The intended recipient charged the daughter as a way to pressure the father, since she was at the time managing his factory.

Even though it is illegal in Iran to charge an individual for someone else’s crime, she was allegedly convicted *in absentia*, as she was not aware of the charges and thus did not show up (“the person who is supposed to deliver the summonses in ‘bogus cases’ never showed up; they just put a stamp on the document saying the address was invalid.”).

At the time, Ms. Malekpour was living her fiance in Tehran. The Tehran prosecutor authorized authorities to arrest her from that house, from where they transferred her to Tabriz.

When they took her to prison, her family went to the Bar Association and requested a lawyer. That lawyer was not able to do much. So they came to Ms. Qurbani.

When Ms. Qurbani got into the Prosecutor’s office, the secretary there saw the file she was looking at and told her that one of the chief Prosecutors had been involved in that case, and that he would not drop it unless he personally received half the amount of the owed money.

Her fiance is now leaving her, since a woman who has been in prison “is looked down upon.”

Another case she works on: Five people in Tehran got together and decided to offer loans, independently from the Government. Another bank, run by the Revolutionary Guards, could not compete with them, so the latter tried to force them to merge, but they refused. After this meeting they sent texts to everyone they knew in town to protect themselves, since they knew the Revolutionary Guards now “had it in for them.” Two hours later, they were taken into detention. Ms. Qurbani tried to meet with them, but was told they were still under investigation. She was able to meet with families of the victims four months later, who said they had since lost 20 kgs. each. They are still in detention and their case is with Court Chamber 4.

A final case: Criminal Court, Chamber 170; about nine months ago, during the evening of mourning for Imam Ali, a young man happened to be in the street instead of at mosque. He was arrested by Basijis with weapons. Ms. Qurbani was called in and arrived at the station, but was herself threatened by Basijis. They are now accusing the victim of attacking the Basijis.

Foad Sajoodi Farimani

Student activist

Mr. Farimani was publicly advertising his beliefs about religion, where he was a PhD student.

He was arrested for this in front of his university on September 2010 by plainclothes officers. He was “scared that they would arrest and disappear him,” so he ran inside the university building so that they would have to get “real police to arrest him.” But they pursued him, they pushed him against the wall, pulled him up from the floor, handcuffed him, and held a gun to his head.

They took him to Evin Prison, which relieved him because it’s an “official prison.” He had no lawyer, no charges were presented to him, and he was put in solitary confinement for more than 40 days (in a 2 by 1.5 meter room).

One of his interrogators asked why he did not necessarily believe in (the Government-approved version of) Islam. He tried to make the argument for it, and one of them put a rope around his neck and pulled to the side. “This was mental torture,” according to Mr. Farimani.

“When you have a physical wound, you can see a scar, but when you have a mental wound you can’t see it.”

He was sentenced to five years for blasphemy, additional time for acting against national security, and three months for each political figure he insulted. (The Revolutionary Guards had actually asked the prosecutor to seek the death penalty for blasphemy).

After 105 days, he was released on five million تومان bail, which a family member eventually had to pay for by selling his house.

“There’s no difference between keeping me in jail or forcing me to work 12 hours a day to pay off a debt; either way I can’t carry out my human rights work.”

Mr. “Jamshid”

Filmmaker

Mr. “Jamshid” left Iran in after the 2009 election crisis. Before that, he had been working with a western filmmaker. During the election, he was filming others and was beaten by forces in the street and taken to the Interior Ministry. He was quickly released.

A few days after his arrest, Mr. Jamshid received a suspicious and threatening phone call, so he looked to flee the country.

Just a few weeks ago (December 2013) a friend of his was arrested and was asked about his whereabouts. He is worried, therefore, that authorities are still interested in his case.

Bardia Taherpour

Political activist

Mr. Bardia Taherpour left Iran three years ago.

He had been politically active in Iran for 10-12 years before leaving Iran. He began his activities one year before university, then went to Dubai after university, returned to Iran, and was arrested upon return.

Before leaving Iran, he was arrested three times for protests (related to, inter alia, workers' rights): once for five days, once for two, and once for 15. He was always in detention centers, though, and never in prison per se. He was sometimes treated well, for what he believes were "propaganda purposes."

When he went to Dubai, he and other friends in the West and other countries established a blog. The blog was not mostly political; it was meant to expose religious hypocrisy. In Dubai, he protested in front of the Iranian Embassy on three occasions following the events of the 2009 election. Iranian authorities were filming all of the demonstrators from the roof of the building, and, he now presumes, identifying them and looking into their backgrounds.

He returned to Iran because his father was gravely ill. (His father eventually died while he was in jail).

He was taken to the Ershad Prosecutor's office (north Tehran). He was kept this time for 43 days before his release. He had two interrogators while in detention.

Dr. Sohrab Razaghi

Journalist

In the (Persian) year 1390 (2011-2012), 84 associations (publications) were shut down.

Many publications are closed down without any sort of process, prior notification, or trial, according to Dr. Razzaghi. His own organization was shut down in 2007 in this way, and he was arrested then.

Moreover, a number of publications that were shut down under the prior administration have approached the authorities for renewal and been denied on dubious grounds. *Neshat*, for example, was already cleared of charges during President Ahmadinejad's second term, and had gone through the whole process of re-registering, but was recently prevented from re-opening through an intervention by the judiciary.

Isa Saharkhiz

Journalist and former political prisoner

Mr. Saharkhiz is a journalist and human rights activist. He was chief of the Iranian news agency (IRNA) in New York from 1992-1997. When Mr. Khatami (a former colleague of his) was elected President, he returned to Iran and become Director-General for all internal newspapers in Iran (part of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance). His plan was to develop journalism by giving permission to an increasing number of publications and through contacts at the international level. He helped found the Association for the Protection of Press Freedom in Iran, "a sort of Iranian equivalent of CPJ," but more of a trade union for journalists.

When "non-reformists" were elected to the Parliament (and later to the Presidency), it became increasingly difficult to work, and he resigned around the time the judiciary began to build a case against him. He worked in the private sector and for the semi-governmental committee which approves media publications.

In 2009, this association was shut down, and many of its members were arrested, including him. A number are still in prison, and many have been forced to leave the country.

Mr. Saharkhiz was also charged with insulting the Supreme Leader. His trial was held “in violation of the Constitution, Article 168 in particular, which provides for the right to a lawyer and trial-by-jury.” In reality, he was tried behind closed doors.

When he was arrested, he was severely beaten and injured, but he survived the beating and was sent to Evin Prison section 209.

He was kept in solitary confinement initially, in a small cell (two-by-three meters) for three months. He had been fainting and lost consciousness a number of times due to kidney and other problems. At one point, another prisoner -- an Afghan drug dealer -- was put in the cell with him in order to alert guards if he would lose consciousness. He was not permitted necessary access to the toilet, and since he had prostate problems his uric acid level built up, leading to more kidney problems.

One night in January, he was forced to go to the prison roof and stand there in only a t-shirt and no shoes for two hours (it was -6 or -7 degrees Centigrade). His toes would stick to the ground when he walked, so he would run and his toes became covered in blisters. He became frostbitten, which is still an issue for him to this day. He also got a sinus infection and a cold from that experience. He became more and more ill, until finally he was transferred to a hospital. He was required to take 32 different pills for anemia, prostate problems, and blood pressure problems. The doctors feared he would have heart failure. Usually under such conditions, one is granted furlough or permitted to obtain proper medical treatment. In his case however, he was kept under guard (three guards at all times) in the hospital for 20 months.

He still suffers from blood pressure problems, and his kidneys have lost 70% of their function.

Mr. “Faraz”

Christian adherent

He has been a Christian since 2010, when he converted. Christians in Iran are face difficulty practicing their religion -- not only converts but also individuals who were born Christian. Often “individuals who visit Christian websites have a virus implanted on their computer.”

The Supreme Leader made a speech in 1389 (2010-2011) concerning House Churches, and the Revolutionary Guards from that point cracked down more harshly on them. The entire task of “dealing” with converts has been placed under the authority of the Intelligence and security structures of the Revolutionary Guards. They operate independently and outside the scope of the law, since they are only accountable to the Leader.

In his own case, in early 2013 authorities came to arrest him because of his affiliation with a Church group, (which he says was a prayer group, although he notes that authorities believe they have political activities), but they mistakenly arrested a different family member after spending three hours in the house with members of his family.

In general, Christian religious practice is monitored and heavily regulated. For example, Muslim converts to Christianity cannot enter Armenian or Assyrian Churches, as all churchgoers must register with the Government. Authorities often place cameras in churches. Christians, especially converts, are careful to use certain euphemistic language in communications.

When ministers or other visible Christian figures are arrested, they are most often pressed to reveal foreign contacts or financial connections / benefactors. According to Faraz,

though, the Protestants in Iran have no political ambitions or aims to overthrow the current Government or the Islamic Republic.

Jahanghir Esmailpour

Author / former political activist

He left Iran in 1996.

He was first arrested in 1979 because of trade union activities, and then was arrested again in 1980 on charges of passing out brochures for the *fedayeen*. It was still early after the Revolution, and the Islamic Republic “had not yet consolidated.” He was asked to pledge not to continue his activities, but he refused, and spent six months in jail.

In the winter of 1982, he was arrested a third time and spent six years in prison. He was released around the time of the mass executions of 1988. His trial lasted minutes. He mistakenly believed that things would get better after his trial; that he would go to prison and that the mistreatment would stop, but this was not the case. He notes that at the time there was a cycle in Iran; interrogators would torture confessions out of prisoners, then when prisoners would deny them in court, they would be sent back for interrogation. In a way, he says, they would not consider the case closed until a confession was obtained and confirmed.

Regarding the 1988 executions: Word had spread amongst prisoners that the MEK had crossed into Iran. A *fatwa* from the Supreme Leader around that time proclaimed that all affiliated would have to be punished for this, but they did not believe the order would be carried out. In fact, authorities began to make statements implying that prisoners would soon be released. However, the executions did begin. They began with repeat offender prisoners, who they seemed to believe “couldn’t be reformed.”

Some individuals were transferred to Revolutionary Guard centers, from where they never returned. Others were executed in prisons, including at Adel Abad prison in Shiraz, where Mr. Esmailpour was at the time (cell number 10, first floor).

Over the course of about six months, authorities purged the prisons of almost all MEK members. He recalls the few people who did return from such scenes reporting having been questioned about their loyalties and whether or not they were willing to die for the MEK. In prison, the administrator announced over the loudspeaker that “now, it will be the leftists’ turn.”

He was transferred along with two others leftist to a Detention Center and was kept in solitary confinement. One of the others was taken away at night, so they assumed he had been executed. Then, Mr. Esmailpour was taken away. Two guards played “good cop, bad cop.” He thought he was going to be executed, that they were preparing the ground for his execution. At one point, he asked them why they were doing this to him, and they responded, “because you are forming political groups in the prison.” He was not executed this time, however, but returned to his cell. He believes he was saved in that particular instance because of pressure that had been applied regarding his case by Amnesty International (friends who had been concerned over his case had contacted the organization).

He spent 2.5 months at this center, during which he was taken for 10 interrogations, and mostly lectured about the virtues of Islam vs. socialism. He was then returned to his cell at Adel Abad. At this point, he realized that he would likely not be killed. In all, 250 or 270 people from just his prison were executed, mostly members of the MEK, during that period. In the end, only a few non-MEK leftists were actually executed. Before he was released in

the winter of 1988, he and other leftists were told that they could now “leave and get on with their lives.”

After his release, Mr. Esmailpour was required to check in regularly with the Intelligence Ministry. Authorities also continued to keep tabs on his contacts and travels (he was not permitted to leave the country).

When he later applied for a passport, he was taken into detention, but released when the Intelligence officer detaining him was contacted by a relative who worked in Government.

Mr. Esmailpour tried to live a normal life in Iran, but his record followed him everywhere he went. He had trouble securing or maintaining employment; for example, and he was worried about the educational prospects for his children.

Reza Nejabat

Former political prisoner

He left Iran in the summer of 1995, but his wife, son, and daughter had left three years earlier than that (authorities had opened up a new file on him in the meantime, so he had to go into hiding during that time).

Mr. Nejabat had been in prison in the 80s, until 1988. His first sentence was a few-year sentence (, but was inexplicably extended for an extra two years. He was in Gohar Dasht, Evin, and Adel Abad prisons throughout his time in detention.

He thought he would be executed in 1988, since he heard about other executions. But he was released.

His wife had also been in prison, and his son was born there. His son is a paraplegic due to heat damage to the brain from prison as a young child.

In 1992, a new file was opened against him. He fled the country.

At one point, a column in *Keyhan* was written against his current organization’s work abroad.

Mr. “Mani”

Student

Mr. “Mani” left Iran right before the 2009 election, because he was a PhD student in political science and had written about politics before.

His father is also in academia and has been politically active and had trouble with authorities due to his own expression. Therefore, Mani cannot return to Iran and his father cannot leave the country to visit him.

His family still gets pressured by security forces because of his own work.

Mr. “Mansour”

Mr. “Mansour” left Iran eight months ago. He was summoned to Intelligence in Tehran a few days earlier, probably because he is a fairly outspoken LGBT rights activist. Mansour spoke with his lawyer, who advised him that he may be in trouble. His partner has since been summoned by authorities.

He notes that two LGBT parties have been broken up (with arrests) over the past two months, whereas there has only been one in the years before.

There is a general level of societal tolerance for LGBT individuals in the big cities, according to Mansour. Gay people can and do get kicked out of work, etc., but not because of that per se, but rather because the employers often don't want "trouble."

Ms. Mahnaz

Political prisoner/ LGBT activist

Ms Mahnaz was arrested in 1981 for political activities and spent one month in an isolated cell.

In 1984, she was arrested and spent three years at Evin Prison; she was banned from leaving the country for 20 years.

In 1995, she was arrested again, this time for trying to leave Iran without a passport, in violation of her previous travel ban. Authorities had apparently been monitoring her calls, and also got to know that she was a lesbian. She was sentenced to a suspended sentence of three years in prison for her political activities and to 100 lashes for lesbianism.

She then left the country.

She points out that Iran is a hetero-normative society, so it tolerates gender-reassignment surgery; individuals who really should not be reassigned are often pushed to undergo the procedure, sometimes very hastily and without proper prior psychological counseling or necessary medical preparation.

She does believe that there is a sense amongst the younger generation that "human rights" can help bolster their quality of life.

Mr. "Reza"

Labour rights activist

Mr Reza was condemned to death in 1970 by the Shah, because he was politically active outside of the country (as a leftist).

He returned to Iran three days before the Revolution, for political reasons (he was already established abroad otherwise).

He was arrested three years after the Revolution, and spent seven months in prison with no trial. He was not tortured, but authorities were very interested in his political affiliations. He was later released, but not permitted to leave the country. He was later able to pay 6 million tumans to a member of the Revolutionary Guard in order to have the travel ban lifted. He then continued to work in Iran.

Mr Reza began running underground guilds of tool-makers and mechanics. He also helped organize a network of groups of civil unions. He and other colleagues printed 1,000 or 1,500 copies of their pamphlet, but they later found out that other people in the country had printed out 100,000.

In 2010, someone stopped, pulled up beside him in a white van, and officers came out and took his watch and his wallet and blindfolded him. He was trying to figure out which route they took; he thinks they traveled to the Intelligence Center at Evin Prison.

This time he was tortured. They would pull chairs out from beneath him, and they beat him with an iron rod; they broke one of the bones on the sole of his foot. It seemed that they wanted him to admit connections to the MEK, although he had none. He requested medical attention for his swollen foot, but instead they put extra pressure on his foot until he lost consciousness. They said: “Ok, now it’s time for you to cooperate with us.” They showed him a picture of his 80-year-old mother-in-law in his own house, laying on the floor, looking like she had been pushed. They threatened to “destroy” his life. He agreed to cooperate.

They put him in a car blindfolded and freed him on the highway. He went to a hospital and had his foot plastered (there is permanent damage). About three months later, he managed to leave the country.

Amir Goli

Student / Kurdish rights activist

Mr Goli was a student at the faculty of the University at Oroumiyeh. Toward the end of his time in Iran, he was with the Democratic Kurdish Student Union, a group that promoted the human rights of Kurds.

He had been covering a number of Kurdish cases, but in particular he was covering the case of Ebrahim Lotfullahi, who was killed by authorities, and another case of death-in-detention of a Kurdish activist.

His mother and elder brother were already in prison at that time. His mother was sentenced to two years in prison for belonging to a group called “Mothers of Peace.”

In late 2008, Amir was still at university, but after a strike by Kurdish prisoners in Iran, authorities began to watch him (he had been the organizer of this strike). Authorities came to his house and turned his house “upside-down.” He first moved around near Sanandaj for a month or so, then was practically in a new city every day. He left in the autumn of 2010.

Amir would like to mention one particular case, which no human rights groups have mentioned. Habibah Tanhayan was killed in detention in 2003 and his body was returned to his family unceremoniously, with no explanation of his death.

Yaser Goli

Student Rights Activist

Mr. Goli was arrested in early 2006 for the first time. He spent 11 days in the Intelligence section of Sanandaj. There was not any abuse or torture, but his prison conditions were very unsanitary. Upon release was told that he would be able to finish his university degree, which he was almost finished with at that point.

But after he finished his last course and went to complete his oral exam, he was told that because he had been arrested by Intelligence, he should check with them. Intelligence officials at the office told him, that undoubtedly that they did not want students who took orders from “foreign influences,” and that he should “go get a degree abroad” if he wanted one.

The second time he was arrested, in the autumn of 2006, he was beaten up by Intelligence officials. One would beat him up, and he would fall into the arms of another, who would beat him. They had other prisoners come in and say that they saw him with five pounds of bombs strapped to his chest. They asked him to confess to this, but he refused. They then

threatened to bring in his family in to beat them up and well. After 91 days at the Intelligence Center, he was transferred to the Sanandaj prison. During this time, he encountered Ebrahim Lotfullahi, the Kurdish student activist who later died under mysterious circumstance in detention.

Fatemeh Goftari

Mother's for Peace / Kurdish rights activist

Ms. Goftari left Iran four years ago. She is the mother of Amir and Yaser Goli.

By 2006, one of her sons had fled, one was in prison, and her husband was also in prison, "so they took me to prison as well."

When her son Yaser had been arrested (in 2006), prison officials called her to ask her to come get his possessions. He was to pay his university tuition that day, so he had quite a bit of tuition money on him. She told them that her husband would come, but they said no, she should come. They told her not to be scared, that she should come to a kiosk and it would only take two minutes. She decided she would not go alone, so she took her other son Amir. They were not far from the prison when a car pulled up, and she was worried that they were there to arrest her son. But they grabbed her neck and tried to arrest her. She told him: "Don't worry, take my bag, I will flee from the other side of the car." But there was someone blocking the way. They treated her harshly and brought her to the Intelligence Center. There, she saw Habibollah Latifi, who was a friend of her son, so she said hello. They banged his head against the wall until he bled. From then on, they were fixated on her connection with him, although, as she kept telling them, she only knew him because he was a friend of her son. They kept her in the Detention Center for eight days and then moved her to a prison. She still had not been presented with charges. She was now in a cell with 50 other women.

One morning in the prison she woke up because she heard terrible crying. She asked two other women what was going on, and they explained that someone was going to be executed. They took her to a bathroom, where they looked through ventilation hole. From there, they could see the hanging rope. The person who was going to be hanged was crying. They would also threaten her often. They did not beat her body, but did slap her face.

After she saw the rope, she decided, along with those two women, that she would embark on a hunger strike. This lasted five days, during which she developed a stomach ulcer. So she and the other women stopped. Three days after this hunger strike, she was taken to a Revolutionary Court. Her trial was five minutes long. At the court, her judge told her: "You are a trouble-maker. Wherever you go, you make trouble." The court demanded five million تومان bail.

She was sentenced to three years for attacking the Government, in the sense that she had insulted them verbally, which was "true, given the fact that her sons were in prison." Another charge was signing the One Million Signatures Campaign, and a third for working with Mothers for Peace. She did not have access to a lawyer during the trial, and later she had trouble finding one who would take her case. But later she did find one, and he got the sentence reduced to two years. To this day she has no idea why she was targeted (specifically), although she is fairly sure it's because of her family's convictions and because as a member of the Mothers for Peace, they would mourn the deaths of all victims of the Government, including members of the political and other groups, without discrimination.

Early one the morning in Sanandaj, two months after her release from prison, she went to buy bread. Since she had already been to prison, she had a "sort of sixth-sense," and

realized that two people were watching her. She thought this was probably because they wanted to arrest her younger son Amir. She went home and warned him, and told him she would go to her mother's house. Within 50 meters from that house, two gentlemen with smoky eyeglasses approached her and grabbed her, one from each side, and told her to go to a side street. While they were walking, she was insulting them and trying to make them angry. At the same time, she took off her shoes and tried to flee. When she began running, one grabbed her overcoat and stopped her. She threw dirt into one of their eyes and ran into a public square. She ran into a store and even though the shopkeeper was trying to kick her out, she stayed and called her family and told her she was going to go to her brother-in-law's place, 20 minutes from Sanandaj.

She stayed at her brother's house for two days. Her husband and son Amir joined her there, and one morning, at 4am, they fled to the Suleiymaniyeh in the Kurdish Regional Government, Iraq.

Amjad Hossein Panahi

Kurdish rights activist

Mr. Amjad Hossein Panahi works for the Defense of Political and Civil Prisoners in Iran (particularly Kurdistan) and the Union of Families of Political Prisoners in Kurdistan.

In addition to the two organizations for which he works, there are also organizations in Iran that work nonviolently for the protection of Kurdish rights, although all are operating illegally.

He noted that dozens of Kurdish political prisoners remain are on death row with sentences confirmed by the Supreme Court.

Mr. "Sharif"

Source close to Kurdish political prisoners on death row

Four of ten remaining Kurdish prisoners are still on death row Jamshid Dehgani, his younger brother, Jahangir Dehgani, Hamed Ahmadi, and Kamal Molayee. All were accused of involvement in the murder of a Friday Imam, and all have suffered forced confession and a lack of due process and forced confession.

One of the prisoners is a child and is married. They claim that they have not had any contacts with Al-Qaeda, Wahabbis, or other extremists groups, despite the fact that the Government has charged them with this. They are "simply Kurds from Sanandaj." They were supposedly arrested for events affiliated with a Salafist named Sheikh al-Islam, but in reality they were arrested "before his activities."

They have been kept in solitary confinement, and apparently endure psychological and physical torture. Their trial did not last more than ten minutes. Six of the original ten have been executed already. The rest are reportedly in bad condition or sick, including one who has convulsions and must take 21 pills per day.

Ms. “Raha”

Human rights activist

In order to pay the 210 million tuman bail for her after she left the country, her family had to sell their house to the Government (the debt is now paid). They bought a smaller house, and the Government has since razed the house to build an apartment complex.

Mithra Tahimi -

Former leftist political prisoner

Ms. Mithra Tahimi had been taken prisoner in May 1983, because she was a member of the Tudeh Party (a secret branch). She was arrested at home by the Revolutionary Guards. She was taken to a Joint Committee, which is now a museum. She was subject to interrogation for one month and held at the temporary detention center for a full year. In 1984, she was sent to Evin Prison. The charge was that she had worked with others to foment a coup against the Islamic Republic, which was “completely untrue. “She had been tortured and beaten during interrogation to admit this, but not as badly as higher-ranking members of the party (two of them were actually killed, although the official story is that they committed suicide. One of them was Rahman Hatifi). When she was being interrogated, they constantly threatened her with execution, which she knew was unlikely given the lack of evidence for charges. Then they told her that if she confessed on television she would receive a lighter sentence.

She was taken to court in May 1985 and sentenced to 15 years in prison after a trial lasting no more than 10 minutes. There were only two men in the room. It was “more like an interrogation than a trial.” She protested, but to no avail. No evidence was presented against her. They wanted to know why there was a secret wing of the Tudeh Party. (The Tudeh Party still supported the Islamic Republic officially).

She spent her sentence mostly in Evin Prison, with six months at Ghezel Hesar in the middle of the sentence.

In 1988, a number of male members of the Tudeh Party were executed. Ms Tahimi was taken to court again at that time and re-tried, as were many members of Tudeh. Many of the men were sentenced to death, while the women received lashing sentences. A number of women whose sentences had been dually served were not released, because authorities still wanted to extract confessions. In her cell block, the first floor was reserved for those whose sentences were completed. The second was for those who had “repented,” and the third was for those still serving sentences. Women from the first floor were often taken to “repentance” rooms. She herself was required to pray; if she did not, they would accuse her of apostasy.

A few months before she was taken for her re-trial, it seemed that some of the prison officials had been released, and they were no longer lashing women. Some women had by that point been released, but she had no way of knowing how many, since they secretly shuffled people around the prison.

In September of 1988, they took seven women -- five from the bottom floor and two from the top floor. She thought she was going for another interrogation, but they took them to court. The women had already decided that if they threatened them with apostasy charges they would threaten a dry hunger strike. When they got to the court, she was blindfolded. A male voice told her to take her blindfold off. The same judge who had previously sentenced her was there, along with the prison discipline officer. The judge asked her whether she still belonged to the Tudeh party; she said yes. Was her father in the party? “No”. Do you pray?

No. “Well then,” the judge said, “the penalty for apostasy is lashing to death.” They said she would be lashed five times for each of the five times per day she refused to pray (which she notes was interesting, since in Shi’a Islam they only pray three times per day), until she would sign a document verifying that she was a Muslim and prayed. When she was first arrested, and for the bulk of her imprisonment, questions revolved around Marxism leanings, but in 1988 they focused on whether or not the prisoners considered themselves Muslims.

In 1990, she was conditionally released -- but not fully released -- from prison. She had been in prison for eight years.

She left Iran in 1994.

Ms. “Noura”

Former political prisoner / advocate for Ayatollah Boroujerdi

Ms. “Noura” came to discuss the case of Ayatollah Boroujerdi.

She claims that the Supreme Leader is denying him necessary medical help. Ms. Noura claims that the Supreme Leader has contacted Ayatollah Boroujerdi directly. She also claims that prison officials have told Mr. Boroujerdi directly that if he does not write a letter recanting his beliefs, he will never be released.

Since last autumn, the situation of Mr. Boroujerdi has worsened. Authorities have increased their pressure on him to sign confession letters and have called and pressured his wife and family to pressure him to sign in turn.

His supporters have asked for the European Parliament delegation to intervene on his behalf. They have also asked others to intervene, but they have not been successful.

Ms. Noura herself was in prison. She was a college lecturer, and established a center in physical/neuro-chemistry. She was very successful, but because of her political beliefs (liberal) she was exiled to work in a small library. When she returned to university, she was also pushed not to work with certain people. She then tried to establish a journal, and even then when her articles were published, authorities censored her name from journals.

She began working with Ayatollah Boroujerdi, and in 2006, when her son was a baby, authorities attacked her home at night and arrested her. Her mother had heart problems, and after that suffered from a heart attack.

She left the country two years ago.

Tania Kaliji

Women’s, children’s and students’ rights defender / journalist

For university students, those who have left the country have enormous trouble obtaining documents proving their educational history, especially the families of students who were or are politically active or who had to leave the country for similar reasons.

Since 2006, she has herself been taken to prison four times. Once, while she was on the phone with her father, notifying him of her arrest, she was slapped and she screamed. In response, her father had a heart attack and required open-heart surgery.

Kaveh Kermanshahi

Kurdish and human rights defender

Mr. Kermanshahi notes that in April 2013, 15 to 20 LGBT individuals at a party in Kermanshah were arrested. All were freed within one week to ten days of arrest.

Some were released on bail and their court cases are constantly being delayed. Some of the individuals were physically harmed, but most were verbally insulted for being gay. Many of their families have also come under pressure due to their being gay.

Revolutionary Guards also lectured them and told them to come to lectures so that they could be “put on the right path.” Those individuals, therefore, and others at the party, are still living in an atmosphere of fear.

Gender-reassignment surgeries occur because the Islamic Republic views homosexuality as a sickness. Social and family norms do not help, as families often cooperate with the discourse by condemning their own.

Ms. “Maryam”

Khavaran activist in Iran

Ms. “Maryam” would like to point out that the families of those individuals executed in the 1980s still suffer today. Many people in Iran and elsewhere feel that this issue is a “thing of the past,” but the pressure against the families continues to this day.

For years the families have been questioned and harassed. They are sometimes threatened by authorities with prison time as well. Despite this, they continue to go to Khavaran, to pay respects to their dead. Of course they do not know the circumstances of the deaths of their loved ones, or even if they were buried at Khavaran, but it has become an important symbol and place of remembrance.

Ms. Maryam herself was summoned by authorities in within the past four years. She was sentenced to 4.5 years in prison in connected to her Khavaran-related activities,

She has also been banned from leaving Iran since then.

Shaheen Navaee

Women’s rights activist

She was a teacher and women’s rights activist during the Revolution, and authorities arrested her students. They demanded that she teach Basijis, and she refused. She continued to work for a few years as an activist, but she had to leave the country in 1984.

Mr. “Khaled”

Kurdish rights activist

Recently, in a school in Kurdistan, a stove caught fire. Two students died and 30 students were burned, and the Government reportedly prevented some donations of people in the community from reaching the victims’ families. Some prominent Iranians also wanted to visit the region (including artists) but were prevented from visiting. Shazram Nazeri, an Iranian singer, apparently organized a benefit concert which raised 52 million تومان, but

she was apparently unable to transmit the proceeds to the victims as well. When family members protested, they were arrested for 24 hours for “causing trouble.”

Families have received only a total of 600,000 tumans for their medical costs. One report also surfaced that money was sent from Germany but was also not transmitted to the victims.

In a separate case, in demonstrations following the self-immolation of three members of the Yarasan minority in 2013, 30 people were arrested and many of their locations are still unknown.

Ms. “Bahareh”

Wife of current political detainee

Both she and her husband left Iran over 10 years ago.

Within the past two years, she went to Iran with her son from abroad, where she had been living. During that time, nothing happened, but as she was about to leave, they took her passport and interrogated her four times. She was mostly questioned about her husband’s activities and statements in foreign media.

Her husband started to be politically active at the age of 14. In 2012, he received a letter from authorities that he was not permitted to leave Iran (he was already abroad though at this point). No reason for the travel ban was listed on the letter, so he consulted a lawyer, and the lawyer implied that he should not get involved in such things.

Recently, she and her husband did go back, along with their nine-year-old son, to Iran. Her husband had not been back to Iran since the events of 2009; he agreed to go back “because of President Rouhani’s pledges.” But hers and his passports were taken away. She and her son were eventually able to come back to their home abroad, but he is still in Iran.

When they were in Iran, they were interrogated once together, but he was summoned three more times. The accusations against him are propaganda against the regime and interviewing with foreign media. He was told of his charges orally.

He was not tortured or mistreated during interrogations.

He is now free on bail; his father guaranteed a large bail amount in order to secure his release.

Intelligence officials promised him that he would be permitted to leave the country, as long as his father continues to pay the bail. However, in reality, officials did not give his passport back to him, and he now has a new trial summons.

They did agree with the authorities not to speak about the case to others, but after a few months, Iranian state press wrote about his case on its own.

Massoud Nour-Mohammadi

Political activist

He is 29-years-old. He was arrested in 2009 after the post-election events. His brother had been arrested in 2009, and authorities did not notify the family of the charges initially or allow visits. During the election events, there were rumors that Mr. Moussavi and Kraroubi would be arrested. He received an SMS that in case of arrest, he and other Green Movement supporters would all meet at a certain square. He was arrested for allegedly passing this text on to others.

He worked at a computer shop. Authorities came to his place of work, and searched his computers there. They then went to his home, confiscated both of his personal computers, and took him to Evin Prison. He was at Evin Prison for 16 days, and was interrogated three times. The first time was short, but the third time it began at 8am and lasted until 4 or 5pm. During the stay in solitary confinement, he was allowed to bathe only twice per week, and there was no possibility to go outside. The only three times he was removed from solitary confinement was for interrogation. He had no contact with his family during that time and no one knew where he was.

On the eve of the 16th day, he was transferred from solitary confinement to Section 240. There were always between three and six people in his cell there. He stayed there for 15 days and was freed on the 31st day of prison. He later came to know that family friends had put 20 million تومان down in bail for his freedom.

In March 2010, he received a letter stating that he had to go to court, in order for them to review his case, and then the date was changed to July. He went to court with his lawyer. The whole case took “maybe seven minutes.” His lawyer argued that he did not need to go to prison for what he was arrested for, but a week later he received notice of a three-year prison sentence. He appealed, and a week later the sentence was confirmed at an appellate court. He decided to leave the country.

Amir Reza Bakhtiar

Member of the National Front Party

Mr Reza has been a member since 1382 (2003-2004). He would like to speak about two cases. The first case is of Mr. Abbas Amir Intizam, who was the spokesperson of the provisional government right after the Revolution, and was then a political prisoner for 32 years. Two years ago, due to illness, authorities allowed him to go home periodically and return to prison. He feels that this case has been forgotten by the human rights community, so he wanted to recall it. Mr. Intizam is 78-years-old.

The second case is Mr. Goutan Dawlati, who is in charge of the student section of the National Front. He was arrested around December of 2012 for activities against national security and for being a member of the National Front. He had been on hunger strike for 22 days as of the time of this interview. He is very ill; he has a heart ailment and must take pills five times per day. At the beginning, the prison said they would not pay for his stay at a hospital because it was too expensive; his family then offered to pay but that was refused. Amnesty International issued an urgent appeal on this case last week (December 2013).

This third case is of Abul Fazl Abedini, a member of the pan-Iranist party and a journalist. He was arrested in 1388 (2009 - 2010) and spent three years at Evin Prison. He was beaten badly, which was documented. He has now been exiled to Karoun prison in Ahwaz for the past year. He is also in bad medical condition, but has not been permitted to access necessary medical care.

Ms. “Yazdani”

Lawyer in Iran / human rights defender

Ms. “Yazdani” has been a lawyer for more than ten years. She has worked on dozens of cases in the Revolutionary Courts.

The Bill of Formal Attorneyship was amended under President Ahmadinejad to strip independence of the Bar by the judiciary, according to Ms. Yazdani. However, the Government responded that it could not be amended.

But the bill remained in the Parliament and is now back with the judiciary. She is worried that the same issue may arise.

She would also like to discuss the election for the President of the Bar Association. All candidates must be vetted and approved by the high Disciplinary Court for judges. In 2011, 28 out of 118 candidates were disqualified. In 2009, 36 of 79 were disqualified. This year, there are 116 candidates, and many lawyers are worried that the same thing will happen. The reason she is highlighting this case is because the recent EU delegation in Iran met with the current President of the Bar Association, but that person is not independent; it is very important that independent voices be heard.

The major issue for lawyers in Iran is their general lack of immunity. A number of lawyers are sentenced to imprisonment or to a cash fine each year for insulting the judge or disrupting order in the court.

There is never a member of the bar association permitted to examine whether such charges are based on reality or due to the judge's personal enmity with the lawyer.

In addition to all of this, the judges "have too much power in Iran," and lawyers are always denigrated in the court. This is worse for women; the hijab is a way to humiliate female lawyers." When women lawyers raise an objection, sometimes judges will counter that the hijab is not sitting properly, in front of everyone, in order to humiliate them. Authorities also check lawyers at the entrance of the court room for "proper hijab."

In political cases she represented (at the Revolutionary Courts), the following are issues which restrained her ability to present a full / proper defense:

Lawyers are restricted in terms of reading dossiers and presenting proper defenses. Lawyers are sometimes threatened that they may themselves receive political charges. In one case, when she tried to defend her client, the judge told her to save her defense of her "own case," and accused her of defending the MEK. In the case of students who were attacked in their dorms in 2009, when she requested a writ from the investigative agent (which is legal), he told the court guards to refuse her entrance, which they did.

Her clients are sometimes coerced to admit to charges, with methods not related to judicial process.

After the 2009 elections, lawyers were not permitted to enter the courtrooms in many cases.

Lawyers and clients are often forced to wait for long periods.

Lawyers are also not able to visit their clients before the trial, or sometimes after the trial.

Lawyers often do not receive the written rulings, so that they can appeal if necessary.

Another issue is the expulsion of law professors. Since the election of President Rouhani, the situation of universities for current professors is better. However, the original expelled lawyers, including Dr. Mohammed Sharif and Dr. Mohammadi Ghorbani, have not been reinstated.

In all types' of cases, political and civil, torture exists, and the right of defense of the client is not respected, although due process provisions are in the Criminal Code of Procedure.

In the case of drug offenders, they are deprived of "any humane treatment whatsoever." They are brought to the court in 10s and 20s in a bus, all in handcuffs and shackled together. They are forced to sit in the corridor in the Revolutionary Courts in a very difficult position. They do not have any chance to clean themselves in detention; the

Revolutionary Courts always smell because of it. Their trials never last more than a few minutes and their cases are not examined by the courts but by the court secretary. Sentences are always heavy. "Seeing them always reminds me of the times of slavery."

In the case of women who have been raped: according to Iranian law, women who complain may be accused of having illicit relations if they cannot prove their charges. The process for examining cases is very wrong and denigrating, especially with regard to the tests that are carried out, including virginity tests. The victim has to explain in minute detail everything that has happened to her, in front of five male judges in the court, a prosecutor, lawyer, and relatives of the victim. The accused is in court and must explain to everyone in public what happened.

Those who are convicted and actually executed for rape are mostly gangs who rape. For example, a gang called the "Black Vultures" were arrested after having raped 50 people. In practice, singular instances of rape are not prosecuted successfully. In cases where a woman goes to court accusing others of rape, if she cannot prove it, she can then be tried for adultery.

Regarding the Islamic Penal Code: *Moharebeh* and *efsed fil-arz* (corruption on earth) remain tools of repression. She would like to refer also to Article 220 of the New Code, which states that where the law is silent, the judge can consult Shari'a-based text. This provision also exists in the Constitution. Before the New Penal Code, the Supreme Court would often say that this provision concerns only civil cases and the Criminal Procedure Code, so they would throw out cases where the judge did not have a different reason. Now they can no longer do that.

Articles 120 and 121 of the New Penal Code state that in cases of "doubt," judges should not issue guilty sentences. But, there are exceptions for *Moharebeh* and *efsed fil-arz*.

Another change -- to the detriment of defendants -- in the New Penal Code is that previously defendants could receive suspended sentences, but now all security-related (and some other) cases may not receive suspended sentences and do not enjoy a statute of limitations.

She does note that under the previous code, if anyone committed any sort of *Moharebeh* and *efsed fil-arz*, they would be sentenced to death. Now, there is a new category of the Penal Code which only provides for a death sentence if the accused carried a weapon and used it. In the past, membership in an organization was enough. But then all defendants who were previously sentenced to death, including members of the MEK or Peyjak, should now be able to ask for a retrial. But despite the efforts of their lawyers, the courts have not permitted retrials. The Kurdish man who was executed in September along with the Baluchis, for example, was sentenced to death based only on a photo of him with a weapon.

Behya Jailani

Human rights activist / former prisoner

Ms. Jailani was arrested in 1998 during the events at the University of Tehran. She was arrested with Ms. Ebadi, Mehrengiz Kar, Mr. Lahiji, and others. She was tortured in the presence of these people. She has brought documents and newspaper clippings about this mistreatment, which was widely reported on, because she had been in France for a long time as a PhD student and sociologist. She went back to Iran in 1998 only at the invitation of an activist.

She brought some notes from her trial. She was in prison for 4.5 years. She was kept in solitary confinement in a cell that was 1x1.5 meters. She was subject to "white torture 24" hours per day (with constant intrusive or insulting music, for example).

Today, economic problems in Iran have destroyed the social fabric. Drug use by women is common, whereas this was not the case in the past. There are husbands who push their wives into prostitution. When she was in prison, she was with a 21-year-old woman who told her that her husband was bringing other men to the house in order to force her into prostitution, and that she became pregnant by another man, at which point the husband accused her of adultery. When she was in Iran, she recalls a place called Bahar where the Government would bring street children. It was supposed to be an educational center for them, but there was very little supervision, and the children often fled. She claims that some of the girls taken to prostitution or even sold by Government officials or their own fathers to Gulf Arab men.

Mahin Shokrullah-Pour

Former political prisoner / husband killed

Both she and her husband have been active for Kurdish parties and in prison. Her husband was in prison for 3.5 years. Due to having been in prison, they were cut off from social opportunities in Iran, and her husband had to work as a freelancer.

Both of them were put in prison in 1365 (1986). Her husband, Mr. Farahman Sadegh Vaziri, who was detained at the Sanandaj Intelligence Detention Center, had been released after the executions of 1988. He had actually been sentenced to death, but at the time, there was the possibility of buying a commutation to a life-sentence.

They both thought that life would get better after release, but even after he was released, he had to report to authorities once per week. Moreover, they had children, and those children were subject to pressure. For example, at school, if her son was at the top of the class, he would never be officially at the top of the class, as he would be excluded from the list. The same happened to her daughter.

In 2003, they decided to leave the country due to this pressure. They made it to Oroumīyeh, but there they were arrested by authorities. They were taken away in a two-car convoy. There was a Revolutionary Guard in the front of the car, and she was trying to explain that they had just come for a summer picnic. He replied: "If it were up to me I would just let you go right now, but the guys in the front car are in charge."

They were taken to the Sarmaz Intelligence police center. Her son was 16 and her daughter was eight-years-old at the time. Officials told them not to worry; that there was a simple "price" for "what they wanted to do across the border": 30 million tumans. Then they took her husband away, and left her and her son handcuffed to chairs (her daughter was able to walk around).

However, the next morning, when her husband was brought out and she tried to approach him, the guards restrained her. She could tell that something was wrong. All of a sudden, the bribe offer was off of the table, and they were taken to court and then to the public prison at Sarmaz (for common criminals). She was worried about her son since this province was known for heroin; she assumed that there would also be drugs in the prison. Everyone was being interrogated every day. What she "didn't know was that [her]" husband had been subjected to harsh torture and was being brought back in front of her son every day.

When she saw her husband for days later, he was unrecognizable and did not respond to her calls in the courtyard. He was being dragged along and his shoulders and arms were slumped. She began to scream and asked the guards what they had done to her; they denied having anything to do with it and said that that's "how he is."

The next day, they were taken for fingerprinting. She had been involved in political activity before, so it was no problem for her, but she was upset when they tried to fingerprint her daughter. They told her that they finger-printed her husband and son as well. This “put her over the edge”; she did not understand why children should be put into the system as “criminals” when they just obeyed their parents and came with them for a ride.

It had only been seven days when authorities told her that her husband had died.

Her son had known about this and a guard had apparently allowed him to call family, so already two days after she found out family from both sides had arrived. They told her to stay quiet or else they would not even give them the body. She was also concerned that she and her children would be released, so she complied. They were released on bail and told to report to the Intelligence Center in Sanandaj 40 days later. They gave them the body, and they went back to Sanandaj. The body bore marks of physical abuse, and a doctor who looked at the body said that it appeared that a chemical which speeds up decomposition was used.

They were warned not to publicize his death or hold a ceremony, but her husband was so well-known in the city that people lined the streets when they returned, despite the presence of Revolutionary Guards. Her husband was killed at the same time as Ms. Zahra Kazemi, a famous case, but their case did not receive any attention, “perhaps because we are Kurds.” The death is still very much with them, especially with her son.

The sentence that had been handed down to them (for trying to exit the country illegally) was for all four family members, so she consulted a lawyer about the status of the sentence given the death of her husband, and she was informed that they could be brought back into detention at any time.

She decided to leave the country. For psychological reasons, she did not want to leave through the same border again, so they arranged for someone to pick them up and take them to Marivan, in Iraqi Kurdistan.

She believes that a local commander was excited to report the “capture of Kumaleh activists,” and that guards abused her husband.

Hassan (Jamal) Poorkarim

Journalist / Kurdish rights activist

In Iran, he worked at weekly publication called *Nedayeh Jameh* (Persian) / *Deni Kumaliyeh* (Kurdish); this was licensed under President Khatami. They also had a Kurdish linguistic center. After two years of publication, he was arrested and detained at an Intelligence Center for 45 days. He was released on 20 million tuman bail and fled with his wife to Iraqi Kurdistan. (The editor-in-chief is also now released, but the editor-in-chief of another publication with which they worked -- *Payam E-Mardam* -- is still in prison).

When they ran the language institute, more than 1,000 students enrolled to study, and the students themselves were also put under pressure. After Mr. Poorkarim was imprisoned, Mr. Abdullah Abbasi took over the school. He was run over with a van belonging to the Revolutionary Guards and killed.

Mr. Poorkarim would also like draw attention to the situation of pollution in the Kurdish provinces, which is increasingly becoming dangerous for the local population.

Finally he would like to raise the issue of the Kulbars, who are still being shot at by Iranian guards in large numbers, and of the land mines in the region, which have still not been cleared by the Government.

Ms. “Suha”

Association for Kurds living in France

Women in Iran face discrimination due to Islamic Sharia law in the country, but it is worse in Kurdistan because of local and tribal practices, and well as the lack of economic development in the region. There is a very high rate of self-immolation suicides of Kurdish women. Most girls in the rural areas do not go to school, and many girls are married off at very young ages.

Many other Kurdish women are themselves Kulbars. There is also a very high divorce rate among Kurds, and she would say that one of the reasons for this is the very bad social situation in Iran, including high rates of addiction to drugs.

There is also a high rate of prostitution in Kurdistan, even though it is against tradition of the region.

Women additionally face political repression, although this is partly the result of “positive” integration developments. It is true that there are now women in the Kurdish associations in the region, which is a sign of integration, but they in turn, face political repression as part of the general “denigration” of Kurds by the Iranian Government. There are a number of Kurdish political parties that have now taken up arms, which then means that female political prisoners are treated more harshly, even if they are merely affiliated with these organizations.

Mr. “Kazem”

Association for Kurds living in France

Mr. “Kazem” would like to draw attention to the “horrendous” condition of human rights for Kurds in Iran. Even those protections which are theoretically provided in the Constitution to others are not provided to Kurds. Kurds who are accused of combatting the regime through violent -- physical or civil -- activities are automatically sentenced to death.

He would also like to discuss the economic situation of the region. There are six members of Parliament representing the Kurdish regions who have recently resigned in protest over what they claim is a lack of sufficient budget allocation to the Kurdistan Province. For the past year, two percent of the budget was allocated to the Province; in the coming year, it will be 0.7%. The province of Kermanshah is also facing budget cuts.

The cultural rights of Kurds are suppressed since they are not permitted to published at all in Kurdish and must use Persian for all administrative affairs.

Finally, although the official unemployment rate in Kurdistan is listed as 20%, it is much higher in reality.

Mr. “Hassan”

Association of Kurds living in France

A UN delegation went to Iran in 2003, and prior to that visit there had been calls for the release of an activist (Sasson Arekan-An), but he was executed the day the delegation arrived.

The Government “plays with Kurdish political prisoners in Iran” like this.

Mr. Shirko Mo’aerfi was told he was going to be executed 10 times. He was transferred a number of times and underwent a mock execution before being executed in the autumn of 2013. Iraqi Kurdistan’s President Jalal Talabani intervened and his execution was suspended, but then reinstated and carried out.

“Authorities are still playing with Messrs. Zanyar and Loghman Moradi, for example.”

There was a Revolutionary Guard Colonel named Mr. Hiva Tab who was himself executed this year. This man had been known to have killed numerous Kurds, but there was no trial or official complaint being pursued against him so his execution is shrouded in mystery; they feel he may have actually been executed as the result of a private or tribal dispute.

There are 28 political prisoners on death row in Kurdistan at the moment.

“Siamak Namatabi”

Artist / 2009 green movement activist

Mr. “Namatabi” from Tehran, was arrested during the February (Ashura) 2010 election protests after being beaten badly. He did not go straight to prison; instead he was taken to a hospital. He remained there for seven days, and had his broken nose set. He was taken to Section 204 (with mostly Kurds who had been arrested for Students’ Day), whereas most other Ashura protestors had been taken to Section 7. After just a few hours he was moved to Section 204. The cell to which he was moved to, was meant to be a solitary cell, but he was squeezed in with five people (with one toilet and sink) and too few sleeping areas.

He was interrogated three times; the first time was only seven days into his sentence so he had been getting nervous. The first time he was interrogated was from 9am to 3pm. The person asked him very general questions, and did not seem to know who he was. The interrogator was kind, according to Mr. “Namatabi”.

The second time the interrogator wanted him to admit that he was involved in the protests, but they had no photos of him. It became clear they had no evidence, so he maintained that he was not involved.

The third time they brought in a photo of someone else that they said was him, but it was a fake photo, so he disputed it.

When they read his charges to him in court (72 days into prison), he denied being involved in the protests. He said he was just walking by and was a simple worker. He did not have a lawyer at that time, because authorities and even lawyers of some of his friends recommended that he not get a lawyer: “Having a lawyer will just make things more difficult for you.” Unfortunately, according to Mr. “Namatabi”, this was “unfortunately true” for others.

He feels that he was convicted and sentenced because there was a sense that he had been in prison for 72 days and so should be punished or have something hanging over his head, in

the minds of authorities. The judge in his case read a statement from the interrogator when he issued his sentencing.

He left Iran in July-August 2010. It was one month after he received his first verdict, and had demanded an appeal.

In September 2010 he received a call from his mother who said that his appeal was rejected and that he received a two-year prison sentence and lashes. Authorities called his parents and they told them he was away studying in Europe, where he decided to stay.

Jaleh Razmi (Tabrizi)

Azerbaijani rights activist

Ms. Ramzi is the ethnic minorities' representative and a co-founder of Sudwind. She is a human rights activist from the Azerbaijani minority and from the Ahl-E-Haq (Yarsan) religion.

President Rouhani made a lot of pledges to the Azerbaijanis in the election, and as a result they voted for him *en masse*. For example, he promised to open Azerbaijani cultural rights center, and told them: "You will no longer need to fill Lake Oroumiyeh with your tears; I will fill it with water!"

However, since then the situation has gotten worse. He appointed Mr. Ali Younessi as Governor of the Province, and he has been bad for the people. The prisons are still full, and "nothing has changed."

"The Azerbaijanis are a peaceful people; they "do not use violence..."

The Yarsan is a religion, just like Baha'is and Dervishes. Until recently, no one spoke about them, and they themselves did not raise their issue. But given the recent self-immolations, she herself, even "even as a secular person," has decided to speak about it.

There are 4 million Yarsan in Iran. Many have been forced to convert to Islam, and indeed, some have. Recently, when one Yarsan man was made to shave his mustache in jail three people Hamedan and Kermanshah self-immolated; one in front of Parliament who died.

Mr. Mehdi Ghasemzadi was also recently executed.

Regarding the general situation of human rights defenders in Iran, the situation is very difficult. She, for instance, cannot go back to Iran and her family faces pressure.

The Azerbaijanis are facing cultural repression; they cannot use their own language, their Turkish names, and their street names are changed in Tabriz and elsewhere.

Simi Sabri

Azerbaijani rights activist

Ms. Sabri has come to look at the question of minorities through the lens of a psychologist, especially the issue of mother tongues.

Iran, for academics of her school of thought, is like "a big prison for mother tongues."

The Azerbaijanis are not a violent group; they never have been. But the Government also suppresses their voices, as with other minorities, and censors much of what they have to say in the news.

She believes that half of the current Azerbaijani political prisoners are detained for protesting the drying up of Lake Oroumiyeh. Another large portion are a group of supporters of the Tractor football team, and were arrested after a game this summer. Usually during the game there are insults chanted between both sides, with the Azerbaijanis being treated as separatists and called “donkeys.” Azerbaijanis in turn chant: “mother tongue is a right for everybody.”

In one particular case, an Azerbaijani guitar player was sent to prison for six months. For the case of Saeed Matinpour, who has a heart ailment in prison, she organized a campaign for him along with Amnesty International; within hours they had over 2,000 signatures.

A last group arrest she would like to mention is when, on the one-year anniversary celebrations of partial self-rule, five people were arrested. One was beaten so badly that his ribs were broken and he was sent to the hospital.

Khabat Ghorbani

Kurdish rights activist / journalist

Both of his parents are Kurdish. He was born in a village called Karagol. On 25 January 1983, Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Basijis attacked his village and killed 18 people, from ages 12 to 95-years-old. Soon after, 68 people were killed in another village.

His organization has produced a documentary on this issue; there are also still many witnesses alive who can confirm this case.

Between the Revolution and 1988, altogether around hundreds of people were killed in Kurdish villages in such campaigns. Mostly they were not members of political parties; “their only crime was being Kurdish.”

In his own case: Soon after the Revolution he saw the fighting begin between the Kurds and the Islamic forces. He was in Mahabad, and there were clashes every day. Iranian forces were bombarding Kurdish cities from 1979 to 1983.

In the summer of 1982, there had been a two-day conflict between the Government and Kurds in Mahabad. One of bombs fell into one of his neighbors’ homes, and their son was injured. After he went by to help, he was also injured. His leg is still not fully functional. He was in the hospital for 21 days. He was first in a room with six people in the hospital; four of them died. After ten days, he was removed to another room with three people; two of them died. In the 21 days he was hospitalized, at least 70% of those who came through were killed.

He was also discriminated against at University. He had been accepted, but then he received a letter saying he was “not suitable according to the Islamic Government” to study.

After 1988, there was a “Cultural Revolution” in Iran and he was able to go to school for Applied Physics. However, he was a part of a protest and was eventually expelled from school. He fled to Iraq and later came to Europe.

Mr. “Hamed”

Former high-ranking politician of the Islamic Republic / former prisoner

Mr. “Hamed” was released from Raja’i Shahr Prison many years ago. There are prisoners there who require urgent medical care, including Mr. Afhsin Barimani, Mr. Siamak Mehr, and Mr Saeed Abedini. Of course Mr. Mansourat Pour and Mr. Osanloo died while in prison.

There are some cases, like that of Mr. Mehr Ronavi at Raja'i Shahr, who cannot be treated in prison, so they will die if they are not released. He also spent time at Evin Prison however, and would like to point out that conditions there are also bad for people who require medical attention, as are other prisons.

All of the wardens with whom he has had contact since he was in prison believe that the political prisoners are “against Islam” and so deserve to die by extension. “To them, each prisoner who dies is less of a strain on the security system.”

Aide to the Former Presidential Campaign of Mir Hossein Moussavi

Both Mr. Moussavi and Mr. Karroubi suffer from different health problems, in large part due to the conditions of their detention. They do not have proper light or ventilation, or nutrition.

They do not often speak of the health issues in public, in order not to affect the “morale of the Iranian people.”

Ms. Rahnavard is also having heart palpitations. All are “victims of aggression,” and are therefore suffering. Over the past 20 days, for example (December 2013), Moussavi, Karroubi, and Rahnavard have been threatened with execution. They have a sense that authorities are probing general opinion in Iran in order to take “some steps,” but they are not sure what those steps are.

Authorities have tried to justify their detention by making it look like a provisional disciplinary detention.

They are also being constantly monitored. The monitoring of people’s lives, overall, is a big problem in Iran; it is an invasion of privacy. His own house was bugged (including his bathroom and bedroom) for two weeks.

The environment is another big problem in Iran. People are dying every day from negative environmental effects.

As someone who was involved in the original drafting of the Civil Rights Charter under President Khatami, he could tell you that the current draft has nothing to do with the original version; in a way, “it’s like a denunciation of our work.”

He does believe that the current international dialogue is positive, if not at least because it highlights and brings to the fore the “differences between the Judiciary and the Government.”

High-Ranking Official of the National Front

He would like to make three points: he has been in prison for 15 years during different period in the history of the Islamic Republic. In Iran, the “Judicial authorities and the Parliament do not follow the same system as the Government. “So sometimes in order to assert authority or to prove a point, they crack down on activists “in spite of the intentions of the Government. This happened under former President Khatami as well.

Some of the members of his movement, like Massoud Pedram, Keyvan Samimi, Ahmad Aeydabadi, and Emad Bahadabar are still in prison.

Ms. Narges Mohammadi, his wife, asks Dr. Shaheed to ensure that all of the civil associations are free to operate in Iran. People like herself and Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh are released, but once they are out, there is no structure in which for them to work and live, and they find themselves in a “bigger prison.”

The situation of prisons in Iran “is horrendous.” Especially in Vakilabad, where there is an infamous “Section of Death,” where up to 500 people can be on death row at one time.

Mr. “Abdolfattah”

Political activist

With the rise of President Rouhani, the “struggle between the Judiciary and the Government is very visible,” especially when one looks at the increase in executions.

On 1 September 2013, there was a “massacre” at Camp Liberty involving cooperation between Iraq and Iran, specifically the Quds Forces. He believes that the reason for this attack is the same for the increase in executions; “internal fighting between Government branches.”

With regard to the attack at Ashraf / Liberty, there are still seven “hostages” being held by the Government. The families of people at Ashraf / Liberty are harassed; for example, his own father, who was an Ayatollah, died 10 years ago, and after that the Government harassed their mother, because he and her sister living abroad have been affiliated with the MEK.

Afshin Karamian Nasab

Human rights defender

Afshin Karamian Nasab was arrested in 19 November 2009 by the security forces. The two officers reported to be from the intelligence office of Kermanshah and stated to have an arrest and search warrant and showed it to him for 3 seconds and confiscated his books and statements. Mr. Karamian Nasab was reportedly blindfolded and transferred to the intelligence office of Kermanshah, where he spent 4 days in solitary confinement and interrogated 3 times that sometime would last for 5 hours and when upon court orders he was transferred to the Evin Prison, he reportedly spent 52 days in solitary confinement at ward 209 and interrogated 5 times including interrogation at night until the morning.

Mr. Karamian Nasab stated that during the interrogations he was seating on a chair with a blindfold while the interrogator would stand behind him and ask questions and was allegedly slapped and punched in the face by the interrogators and be kicked in the stomach. On the second day, he was reportedly taken to branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court of Kermanshah and was charged with “inciting the students to violent actions to oppose and overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran State,” “publication and distribution of anti-state and religion statements to weaken Islam,” “cooperation with anti-Islamic Revolution groups,” and “disturbing security and public order.” Mr. Karamian Nasab stated that he did not have access to legal counsel when the judge was being charged, where the judge allegedly threatened his life by stating that people who have been in his situation were executed while Mr. Karamian Nasab maintained that he was a student activist that was critical of the situation of human rights. Mr. Karamian Nasab stated that he was threatened him with rape and arrest of family members. When the interrogators reportedly found out the he is Yarsan, they would allegedly state that he is unclean and insulted him. He was reportedly released on a \$30,000 bail and while he was in Kermanshah, Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran issued its court ruling without his presence and sent a copy of it to his home address that stated he is a fugitive.

Mr. Karamian Nasab stated that he was sentenced to 10 years of suspended prison sentence, which was allegedly based on the case files discussed at the court and the confessions that were obtained under torture. When the court ruling was reportedly received by Mr. Karamian Nasab, the 20 days’ time for appeal was passed. He continued his activities until he was reportedly summoned to branch 16 of Tehran revolutionary court on 21 January 2013 and faced two new charges “acting against national security” and “propagation against the state.” Mr. Karamian Nasab maintained that he left the country before the court

session.

Kaveh Taheri

Political activist

Kaveh Taheri, activist and blogger, reported that he was arrested on 23 September 2012 and taken to ministry of intelligence Number 100 detention center. At the detention center he was reportedly beat on his feet and suspended from the ceiling by a rope attached to his handcuffs. On 15 November 2012, he was reportedly taken to the Adel Abad prison in Shiraz, where his father was summoned the next day to if Kaveh Taheri is released, he would publicize his son's case. 3 December 2012 he was taken to Number 100 detention center and allegedly forced to confess in interview recorded for television. Taheri was convicted in revolutionary court for acting against national security and insulting Iran's leader. After appeals he received a 2 years prison sentences and 3 years in exile at Larestan. He was also tried in public court for "blasphemy" and "publishing false information" and sentenced to 40 lashes and a fine.

Masoud Lavasani

Journalist / blogger

Masoud Lavasani was reportedly arrested on 26 September 2009 by the security forces with an arrest warrant and was taken to the investigatory branch of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran. There his temporary detention order was issued without allegedly allowing him to post bail. He was officially charged with "propagation against the state" for the articles he had written about the Green Movement. The officers reportedly took his wedding album, films, novels, and fiction books, which have not been returned. According to Mr. Lavasani the authorities denied his request to have access to legal counsel and dismissed his appeals to their unlawful conduct, such as allegedly blindfolding him.

Mr. Lavasani was reportedly taken to ward 2-alef of the Evin Prison, where the interrogator allegedly used electric shocker and physically beat him during the interrogation that he would sit facing the wall; Mr. Lavasani maintained that later he had to undergo two surgeries due to the neck injury that was caused by these beatings. The interrogator would reportedly ask Mr. Lavasani about the videos that he uploaded on YouTube from the post-2009 protests, and the content of his emails, and asked him to confess in front of a camera. Mr. Lavasani stated that one of the interrogation sessions took place at 3:00am. He reportedly spent two years in prison. The court reportedly refused to accept the lawyer chosen by Mr. Lavasani and he was only able to know this on the court date.

In January 2012 Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran reportedly charged him with "acting against national security," "insulting the leader," "propagation against the State," and "insulting the president." Mr. Lavasani was sentenced to 8.5 years in prison and banned from journalism for life, which was then reduced to 6 years in prison and 10 years ban from journalism at the appeal court. In July 2012, he was released on \$267,000 bail. Mr. Lavasani stated that the authorities did not provide him with a copy of his final sentence and appeal verdict in writing. On the contrary he was verbally informed and showed the sentence after Mr. Lavasani left the country, his interrogator allegedly threatened his life.

Mr./Ms. “Hassanpour”

Baha’i

An informed source, Mr. or Mrs. “Hassanpour,” reported that in 2013, s/he was summoned over the phone by the security officers to the local intelligence office. S/he was reportedly blindfolded and taken to search his/her house and parents’ house with warrant. The security officers reportedly confiscated religious photos, books, and his/her computer. The interviewee reportedly spent the 17 days in solitary confinement and spent 7 days at the local intelligence office. The second day the judge officially charged him/her without providing evidence with “propagation against the state,” “membership in association with illegal groups that disrupt security,” and “cooperation with other state enemies.”

The interviewee reported that s/he did not have access to legal counsel. The interviewee maintained that s/he was interrogated 6 times, which would start after 16:00 and last between 2 to 4 hours. The interviewee was reportedly asked to wear a blindfold and face the wall while the interrogator was behind him/her and would slapped behind on the back and threatened with physical punishment. The cell’s light was reportedly constantly on and he/she could hear the sound of other detainees being allegedly tortured, and insults made against the interviewee, his/her family, and beliefs. The interviewee was reportedly detained for 7.5 months, was released with \$30,000 bail and has not yet gone on trial. The interviewee reported that the Baha’is that were arrested a few months before him/her were physically beaten and sexually harassed by the authorities.

Mr./Mrs. “Nasrallah”

Student activist

A student activist, Mr. or Mrs. “Nasrallah,” reported that s/he was arrested by the security officers in 2010. When the interviewee asked for arrest warrant, the officer allegedly showed his walkie-talkie and stated that this is his warrant. The interviewee was reportedly blindfolded in the car and was detained at the ministry of intelligence of Mashhad for seven day, where the interrogation began on the second day and last between 3-4 hours. S/he reported that the interrogators would stand behind him/her. S/he was physically beaten by the interrogators; where they would allegedly hit his/her head on the desk.

The authorities reportedly denied him/her to use the restroom until he/she signed the documents and when on the fourth day, the s/he was taken to the Revolutionary Court of Mashhad, the judge asked him/her to sign the documents and refusing the his/her request to read the documents by stating he pulled that s/he should do so without reading them like the previous night otherwise situation will remain the same. The interviewee reportedly signed the documents that s/he later on realized were related to his/her charges, “Propagation against the state,” “Insulting the supreme the leader,” “acting against national security,” and “keeping vulgar and unknown information.”

The interviewee was reportedly released on the 7th day. In 2010, the Revolutionary Court of Mashhad reportedly sentenced the interviewee to 10 months in prison, 100 lashes, and \$70. The interviewee maintained that at the appeal court was informed by judge that s/he does not have the right to legal counsel, however, his/her friend who was a lawyer was able to submit a defense bill and the lashes were lifted. In 2011, police officers, who stated to have a warrant, arrested the interviewee and transferred him/her to the Vakil Abad prison, where s/he was allegedly raped by other cell mates. He/she allegedly also witnessed mock executions, executions, and lash punishment. The interviewee maintained that the Vakil Abad prison has the capacity for 3800-4100 inmates whereas in 2011, 13,900 prisoners were detained.

Mr. “Aslan”

Baha’i

A Baha’i father, Mr. “Aslan,” described to the Special Rapporteur how his family repeatedly experienced discrimination related to their economic and social rights. He had been working as a carpenter for several years in a shop. In 2001 he started his own shop and applied for the appropriate license at the semi-governmental carpenter’s guild. Licenses, he said, were typically granted within six months. The guild initially presented seemingly neutral reasons for not granting him a license, such as that fact that his shop was “too small.” But when he would get a bigger workspace they would offer a different reason.

After three years of back-and-forth guild staff allegedly told him that they actually were not approving his license because he was a Baha’i, a fact he had indicated on his initial application. He was forced to work without a license until 2009, when the mayor’s office finally closed his shop, causing him to lose his capital and tools. Also in 2009 his daughter wanted to enroll in a specialized public high school that offered classes in tourism, a subject she was interested in. Upon application the father asked the school’s principal if his daughter’s faith was an issue. A few days later the principal called the father and said that she had contacted the Ministry of Education and it instructed her not to grant admission to his Baha’i daughter.

Mehdi Noorzar

Political activist / lawyer

Green Movement activist Mehdi Noorzar, a lawyer formally employed in a state agency, told the Special Rapporteur that authorities arrested him on 9 August 2011 when he responded to a summons to Evin Prison. He reported being held in solitary confinement for three months and subjected to various forms of torture including: punching, kicking, baton beatings, whipping, blindfolding, and a mock execution. He said that his interrogators were trying to make him confess to connections with monarchist groups or the MEK, both of which he purportedly told interrogators he opposed. He was formally charged 20 days after the start of his detention on charges of acting against national security, insulting the supreme leader, insulting the president, blasphemy, and insulting clerics. At the trial the judge advised him not to bring his lawyer into the courtroom in order to receive a lighter sentence. Yet, the trial purportedly only lasted ten minutes, with the judge taking a very hostile tone, and Noorzar was sentenced to three years in prison. An appeals court reduced the sentence to one year in prison, a one-year suspended sentence, and 74 lashes. On 7 August 2012 his one-year sentence came to an end, but as his release fell on a weekend, he was kept in prison for three more days until the flogger was at work to administer the lashes.
