

QUARTERLY REPORT

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023

IRAN: A HUMAN  
RIGHTS REPORT  
ON THE AZERBAIJANI  
TURKS IN IRAN





### **About the Foundation for Inclusive Society**

**T**he foundation for Inclusive Society (FIS), a nonprofit based in the United States, is dedicated to studying and empowering minority groups. Through conducting analyses and publishing reports on human rights and environmental issues, FIS strives to meet the needs of marginalized communities. Visit our official website, [www.inclusivevision.org](http://www.inclusivevision.org), to access our latest reports and publications. For inquiries, feel free to reach out to us at [secretary@inclusivevision.org](mailto:secretary@inclusivevision.org).

## Summary

During the final quarter of 2023, there were notable human rights violations as authorities apprehended 24 individuals. Some of these individuals have been temporarily released on bail while awaiting the outcome of their legal proceedings. This report also provides updates on previously detained cases, including the forced exile of one individual to a remote location. We have documented the summoning of 10 individuals by security forces, including three women. Regrettably, at least two individuals faced the gravest consequence, being executed by hanging following capital punishment sentences. 16 individuals received varying penalties due to their involvement in civil activities. Notably, within this cohort, five individuals had previously been sentenced, but their cases have since been revisited and updated. Of particular note, a civil activist experienced academic suspension, while the creative pursuits of at least one artist were abruptly halted. Updates have been provided regarding two cases of individuals who have been exiled. Five individuals reported instances of harassment and assault by security and police forces, exacerbating the already distressing situation. Additionally, three newborn children were denied national identification cards due to their chosen name.

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# PART ONE

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# Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This human rights report delves deeply into the circumstances confronting Azerbaijani Turks in Iran from October to December 2023. It sheds light on the prevalent issue of individuals being detained and subsequently released in Iran. Through comprehensive narratives, the report depicts the recurrent pattern of arrests and releases, underscoring the persistent hurdles to freedom of expression and human rights within the nation.

It also exposes a troubling pattern by Iranian authorities: silencing dissent through intimidation and isolation. Activists face relocation to remote areas, crippling their ability to engage with civil society. Unlawful summons by intelligence agents serves as a constant threat, hindering participation in diverse activities. Organizations and individuals deemed critical of the government face suspension and restricted freedoms of expression and association. Yet, the report also highlights the resilience of those targeted by harassment and assault, who continue to fight for justice and accountability.

Moreover, the report goes beyond exposing silencing tactics. It also critiques Iran's continued use of capital punishment, aligning with Amnesty International's long-held position of



denouncing the death penalty and advocating for its abolition in the country. Finally, the report examines the denial of ID certificates to children with Turkish names, highlighting a potential violation of the rights of both parents and children.

The report culminates with a set of recommendations designed to address the human rights concerns it has documented. These recommendations aim to establish a society in Iran where all citizens can freely exercise their fundamental rights without fear of reprisal. To facilitate further inquiry or engagement with the report's findings, contact details are also provided.

Special recognition is extended to Turkan Bozkurt and Behzad Jeddi for their invaluable contributions to the preparation of this report.

## 1.2 Methodology

This section explores the methods used to gather and analyze information for this human rights report on Azerbaijani Turks in Iran, covering October to December 2023. **Objectives:** The primary aim of this report is to draw attention to specific instances of human rights violations experienced by the Azerbaijani Turks in Iran. It sheds light on a spectrum of violations, including arrests and subsequent releases, forced exile cases, and instances where punitive measures, such as executions, were disproportionately severe. Additionally, the report extends beyond mere documentation by offering recommendations to address the documented human rights violations, targeting the promotion of accountability, justice, and the protection of fundamental human rights. By highlighting these violations and proposing actionable recommendations, the report aims to contribute to a discourse aimed at rectifying the injustices faced by the Azerbaijani Turks in Iran, advocating for the protection and promotion of their fundamental human rights, underscoring the urgent necessity for action to safeguard their rights and dignity. **Sources of Information and Data Collection:** The information presented in this report is the outcome of a network of Azerbaijani human rights activists within and outside Iran. These sources provide invaluable firsthand accounts, testimonies, and documented evidence of human rights abuses

experienced. The data collection process for this report involved the effort of the network of Azerbaijani human rights activists inside Iran, comprising 16 dedicated individuals. These activists played a crucial role in collecting and disseminating information on human rights violations in the Azerbaijani region of Iran. Various sources were utilized to collect data, including eyewitness testimonies, accounts from the families of victims, published reports, and narratives shared by the protesters themselves. These sources provide firsthand information and personal experiences, enabling a more detailed understanding.

### **1.3 Data Analysis**

To provide a comprehensive understanding of human rights violations faced by Azerbaijani Turks in Iran (October-December 2023), this report utilizes a meticulous data analysis and categorization process. Collected data undergoes rigorous examination, then classification into distinct sections focused on specific violations. This systematic approach ensures a clear and thorough overview of the human rights situation, shedding light on the challenges and injustices the community faces. The Foundation for Inclusive Society recognizes the importance of data integrity in presenting a credible picture. This is why they collaborate with Azerbaijani human rights activists to employ stringent verification methods. This collaborative effort involves cross-referencing data from multiple sources to guarantee authenticity and reliability. By combining a meticulous verification process with the collaborative efforts of Azerbaijani human rights activists, the Foundation for Inclusive Society strives to present a credible and accurate portrayal of the challenges and injustices faced by the Azerbaijani Turkish community in Iran. This report offers a valuable resource for understanding the human rights situation within this community.



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# Arrested and Released Individuals

## 2.1 Arrested and Released Individuals

In Iran, it is common for individuals to be arrested and later released, especially during times of socio-political unrest and government crackdowns. These arrests often target political dissidents, human rights activists, journalists, religious minorities, and members of marginalised communities perceived by the government as posing a threat to the regime. Upon their arrest, detainees may undergo interrogation, face a wide range of charges from activism to espionage, and endure prolonged periods of detention without formal charges or fair trials. While some are eventually released due to lack of evidence or international pressure, others remain incarcerated, often experiencing mistreatment or torture. This cycle of arrests and releases highlights the ongoing challenges to freedom of expression and human rights in Iran.

On October 1, 2023, the intelligence agents of Zanzan arrested Safiyeh Gharebaghi, a civil and women's rights activist living in Zanzan and transferred her to an unknown location. She was held in the 9th branch of the Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office of this city. Qarabaghi defended herself against the charge of "propaganda against the regime".

The hearing pertained to the complaint filed by the Zanjan Intelligence Department concerning the content of Safieh's Instagram stories and posts. During the proceedings, the investigator posed inquiries regarding the substance of her stories. As per the official document from the second branch of the Zanjan Revolutionary Court, Safieh was accused of 'propaganda against the regime'. On October 8, Safiyeh Gharebaghi was released on bail until the end of the proceedings. On October 4, 2023, the plea for conditional release submitted on behalf of Arash Johari, an Azerbaijani labour rights activist who had served over three years of his seven year sentence in Evin prison, was denied.

Based on the accounts provided by the relatives of this Azerbaijani activist, interference from security institutions in the case has resulted in Arash Johari being deprived of his fundamental rights. Opposition from judicial security officials to his conditional release has extended his incarceration without leave. Since his arrest on October 21, 2020, this Azerbaijani labour rights activist has not been granted any form of furlough.



**Safiyeh  
Gharehbaghi**  
Zanjan-Zanjan



**Arash Johari**  
Tehran-Tehran



**Omid  
Mohammadzadeh**  
Alborz- Karaj



**Mohammadreza  
Amani Nadarlu**  
East Azerbaijan-  
Shabestar



**Yorush  
Mehralibaglou**  
East Azerbaijan - Culfa



**Saber  
Hosseinzadeh**  
East Azerbaijan -  
Tufarghan



**Hamed  
Yeganehpour**  
East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Milad Jalili  
(Ilshan)**  
East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Mehrdad  
Ghaderi**  
East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Morteza  
Nourmohammadi  
Nadarlu**  
East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Hossein Azadi**  
East Azerbaijan-  
Tabriz



**Amirhosein Aghaii**  
Alborz- Karaj



**Ebrahim  
Avazzadeh**  
Tehran-Tehran



**Naser Razmjoo**  
Ardabil-Ardabil



**Parasto Faridi**  
East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Sam Rajabi Tabriz**  
Tehran-Tehran



**Hadi  
Gholizadeh**  
East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Davood Shiri**  
East Azerbaijan- Tabriz

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In January 2021, by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Iman Afshari, he was convicted and sentenced to ten years in prison on the charge of 'managing illegal gangs with the aim of disrupting the security of the country,' as well as five years in prison for the charge of 'collusion'. Additionally, he received a one-year prison term for the charge of 'propaganda against the regime.' Following an appeal, his sentence was reduced to seven years and six months of incarceration.

On October 14, 2023, Mohammadreza Amani Nadarlu's court session took place at the branch of the Revolutionary Court of Justice in Shabstar, East Azerbaijan. Represented by Asghar Mohammadi, an Azerbaijani lawyer, Amani faced charges of "propaganda in favour of groups or organisations opposed to the Islamic Republic of Iran" and "insulting ethnic groups."

On May 21, 2023, Mohammadreza Amani Nadarlu was apprehended by security forces. He was subsequently released from Tabriz Central Prison on June 10, 2023, after posting bail, pending the conclusion of legal proceedings. On August 19, 2023, the court session for this Azerbaijani civil activist was postponed at the mentioned branch due to the judge's absence. Amani Nadarlu's defence lawyer Mohammadi had submitted the defense bill to the office of the branch as scheduled.

On October 7, 2023, Omid Mohammadzadeh, a civil rights activist, was apprehended by security forces at his residence in Karaj city. His family, fearful of potential repercussions and threats from security agencies, refrained from reporting his arrest. However, on October 25, 2023, Omid Mohammadzadeh was released after posting bail, awaiting the conclusion of legal proceedings.

On November 7, 2023, Yorush Mehralibaglou was detained by security forces, marking yet another instance of his arrest due to his involvement in civil and political activities. The specific accusations against him remain undisclosed at this time. Yilmaz Mehralibaglou, Yorush's brother, reported that Yorush was apprehended by armed security officers in Gregar (Hadishahr) located in East Azerbaijan. The security forces not only arrested Yorush but also instigated an atmosphere of fear and intimidation during the operation.



On November 14, 2023, His family got a one-minute call from Yorush Mehralibaglou. In his On November 14, 2023, Yorush Mehralibaglou's family received a brief one-minute call from him. During this call, the Azerbaijani civil activist managed only to inquire about his family and children, assuring them of his well-being before the conversation abruptly ended. Unfortunately, his family was unable to glean any further information about his current condition. On the same day, at Branch 15 of the Tabriz General and Revolution Prosecutor's Office, Mehralibaglou's family sought information regarding his situation and the grounds for his arrest. Judge Mousavi, presiding over the branch, disclosed that Yorush Mehralibaglou would be detained for a minimum period of two months.



**Seyyed  
Mohammadreza  
Movahed**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Araz  
Ebrahimnejad**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Ali Babaei**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



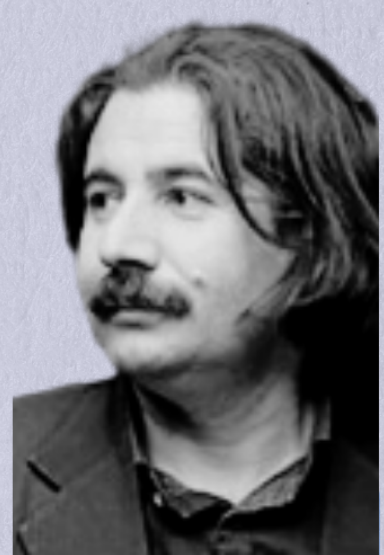
**Javad Sudbar**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Salar Taher  
Afshar**

West Azerbaijan- Urmia



**Ebrahim  
Rashidi**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz

On November 23, 2023, Saber Hosseinzadeh was released after posting bail pending the conclusion of legal proceedings. His arrest had occurred on October 15, 2023, at Tofarghan city (Azershahr), East Azerbaijan, by security forces. The investigator handling his case has declined to authorise his temporary release or accommodate legal representation, thereby impeding due process. Additionally, Hosseinzadeh's family refrained from reporting his situation due to apprehension regarding potential repercussions and threats from security agencies. Detailed information regarding the grounds for his arrest, potential charges, and his current whereabouts remains undisclosed. On November 28, 2023, Hamed Yeganehpour was released from Tabriz Central Prison after posting bail, a measure necessitated by the deterioration of his health. His arrest had transpired on November 8, 2023, in the city of Tabriz, as conveyed to his family and relatives via a phone call from the Intelligence Department.

According to Yeganehpour's family, he had travelled to Tabriz to seek medical attention. However, he was apprehended by security forces upon arrival. It's important to note that Yeganehpour previously had a heart surgery and was undergoing medical treatment, including prescribed medication to aid in his recovery. Regrettably, there is no available information regarding the specific accusations levelled against him.

On November 28, 2023, Milad Jalili (Ilshan), a rapper from Azerbaijan was apprehended in Tabriz. Following his arrest, on December 1, 2023, a collective of rappers from Tabriz convened in a local park to express solidarity with Ilshan and other detained Azerbaijani activists. They advocated for their release through the medium of rap music. As of now, there is no additional information available regarding the specific accusations against Milad Jalili (Ilshan).

On November 28, 2023, Morteza Noormohammadi Nadarlu and Mehrdad Ghaderi were released after posting bail, pending the conclusion of legal proceedings. The sequence of events leading to Morteza Noormohammadi Nadarlu's arrest began on September 9th, 2023. He was initially summoned to the registration office in Sofian City to address the process of obtaining an ID for his child. Upon his arrival at the registration office, however, he was unexpectedly detained by security forces.

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Subsequently, security forces accompanied him to his residence where a search was conducted, resulting in the confiscation of personal belongings, including books. He was held in intelligence detention until September 28, after which he was transferred to Tabriz Central Prison.

It's worth noting that prior to his arrest, Morteza Noormohammadi Nadarlu had encountered opposition from the registration office in Sofian regarding the issuance of an ID for his child named "Hoonay," with officials objecting on the grounds of the chosen Turkish name for his child. At the time of this report, the specific charges against Ghaderi remain unknown.

On November 29, 2023, Hossein Azadi and Amirhosein Aghaii were released from Tabriz Central Prison after posting bail until the end of the prosecution process. There is no information about the possible accusations.

On November 30, November Ebrahim Avazzadeh was released from the Tabriz Central Prison after posting bail until the end of the prosecution process. Prior to this, his sister pleaded for help by stating "Until now, our appeals to judicial authorities and relevant organisations to follow up on my brother's condition and his place of transfer have been unsuccessful and we have not been able to get any information about him, so I ask all those who listen to me to help us to find my brother".

On October 1, 2023, Ebrahim Avadzzadeh was apprehended by intelligence forces in Tehran. Avadzzadeh's sister, in a public statement, revealed the circumstances surrounding his arrest, stating: "Eight intelligence forces entered the house with excessive force, disregarding the privacy of our home and family. They made the arrest of my brother, Ibrahim, while he was sleeping, without presenting any judicial order".

On November 30, 2023, Naser Razmjoo was released after posting bail, pending the conclusion of legal proceedings. On October 21, 2023, this Azerbaijani civil rights activist was arrested by security agents in Ardabil City and subsequently transferred to the detention centre of the Tabriz Intelligence Department. His relatives were informed of his situation through a brief phone call during which Razmjoo disclosed his transfer to the Tabriz

Intelligence Department's detention centre. During the arrest, security officers confiscated some of Razmjoo's personal belongings, including his mobile phone.

On October 23, 2023, some of the families of activists detained at the Intelligence Department of East Azerbaijan, Tabriz city, visited the 15th branch of the General and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office. There, they were informed by Mousavi, the investigator handling the case that their loved ones' detention had been extended by another month. Expressing their concerns over the prolonged arbitrary arrests, the families were met with harsh and disrespectful treatment from Mousavi. They were even threatened with arrest during their visit to the 15th branch.

Despite the families' persistence and the intervention of protection agents from the prosecutor's office and police forces present, Mousavi remained unyielding, stating that no actions could be taken regarding the legal investigation of the case beyond compliance with orders from the Information Department.

On December 3, 2023, Parasto Faridi was released from Tabriz Central prison after posting bail until the end of the legal proceedings. This student of industrial engineering at Tabriz National University was arrested by the intelligence force on November 4, 2023. The specific reasons for her arrest and the details of any potential accusations in her case remain unknown at this time.

On December 3, 2023, Sam Rajabi Tabriz was released from Evin prison after completing a six-year sentence. Alongside several other environmental activists, Sam was apprehended by IRGC intelligence and transferred to Evin prison. This activist underwent a trial at Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Salvati. Sam was found guilty of collaborating with the US government and sentenced to six years in prison. The appeal court also upheld the verdict.

On December 9, 2023, Araz Ebrahimnejad, Seyyed Mohammadreza Movahed, and Davood Shiri were released after posting bail until the end of the proceeding process. They were

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detained in solitary confinement for more than 100 days. They were initially arrested on September 13, 2023 and detained by security forces in the city of Tabriz.

On December 23, 2023, Salar Taher Afshar was released after posting bail, pending the conclusion of legal proceedings. He had been apprehended by intelligence forces on December 19, 2023. Taher Afshar has a history of previous summonses, arrests, and imprisonments. For instance, on July 16, 2020, he was arrested after being summoned to the Intelligence and Security Police of Urmia City (9 Pilleh) in relation to the aggression of the Armenian army into the Republic of Azerbaijan. He was detained after participating in the protest rallies in Urmia, which were held in support of the military action of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Karabakh, and was arrested there.

On October 3, 2022, Salar Taher Afshar was arrested by security forces in Kermanshah. It was reported that he was serving his military service in Kermanshah at the time of his arrest.

On December 23, 2023, Ali Babaei and Javad Sudbar were released after posting bail until the end of proceedings. On September 23 Babaei and Sudbar were arrested by intelligence forces in Tabriz and were detained in solitary confinement for more than 100 days.

Security forces subjected Ali Babaei to physical assault during his arrest at his workplace in Tabriz. Following the arrest, Intelligence forces proceeded to Babaei's residence in Mian-doab, West Azerbaijan where they confiscated personal belongings including a computer and books belonging to this national activist.

On December 24, 2023, Branch 22 of Tabriz Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office, headed by Jalil Jabarkhodi, issued a restraining order against Hadi Gholizadeh for the accusations of propaganda against the regime and disruption of public order. Gholizadeh was initially arrested in Tabriz on December 7, 2023. He underwent an investigation by intelligence forces and was released after several hours.

On December 30, 2023, Ebrahim Rashidi was arrested by intelligence forces. He was transferred to the detention centre of the Intelligence Department of Ardabil City after the ini-

tial charge of "propaganda activity against the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran" was explained. He has previously been summoned, threatened, and arrested due to his civil activities.

# Sentenced Individuals

## 3.1 Sentenced Individuals

Several activists received prison sentences during the fourth quarter of the year. Additionally, there are updates on the cases of individuals previously arrested and sentenced to prison in the preceding months.

On October 1, 2023, Yunes Gholizadeh and Ebrahim Asemani, were sentenced to a fine instead of imprisonment and flogging by the 108th branch of the criminal court of two cities of Tabriz.

According to the decree issued by the 108th branch of the criminal court of cities of Tabriz, each of the activists has to pay a fine for the charge of disturbing public order and peace (by attending illegal gatherings). They have been sentenced to fines to the government fund instead of imprisonment and whipping.

Gholizadeh and Asemani along with 13 other Azerbaijani activists were arrested by the security forces at a protest rally in Tabriz city on July 16, 2022, at the same time as peaceful protests against the drying up of Lake Urmia in Urmia city.



According to a post on Jafar Nourmohammadzadeh's personal Instagram page, Sahand Nourmohammadzadeh, his son, has been experiencing vision problems. This worried father wrote on his personal Instagram page: "Today, on October 4, 2023, marks one year since my son's arrest and subsequent sentencing to 16 years in prison, all because he kicked a trash can. Ten years of exile awaited him in Kahnuj prison at the peak of his youth. You destroyed all his dreams and due to psychological pressure, he is losing his eyesight. His right eye has a problem. Strangely, you talk about Islam and justice. Which justice? I want justice for my son."

Nourmohammadzadeh, detained during the Women, Life, and Freedom protests, received his verdict from Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, under the leadership of Judge Iman Afshari. His arrest occurred on October 4, 2022, amid nationwide protests on the Ashrafi Esfahani highway in Tehran. Initially, Judge Ali Mazloun from the 29th branch of the Revolutionary Court handed down a "death sentence" to Nourmohammadzadeh on



**Ali Razizadeh  
Nadarlu**

Tehran-Tehran



**Sahand  
Nourmohammadzadeh**

Tehran-Tehran



**Yunes Gholizadeh**

East Azerbaijan-Tabriz



**Ebrahim  
Asemani**

East Azerbaijan-Tabriz



**Naser Razmjoo**

Ardabil-Ardabil



**Sina Yousefi**

Germany-Berlin



**Peyman Ebrahimi**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Armita Pavir**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Mohammad  
Maleki**

Zanjan-Zanjan



**Karim  
Ismailzadeh**

East Azerbaijan - Tabriz



**Abdullah Ansari**

Ardabil - Ardabil



**Ebrahim Rezaei**

East Azerbaijan-Tabriz



**Ashkan  
Saadatmehr**

East Azerbaijan-Tabriz



**Saleh  
Mollaabbasi**

East Azerbaijan-Ahar



**Jafar  
Ebrahimi**

Tehran - Tehran



**Parviz Siyabi**

Ardabil-Ardabil



**Reza shahabi**

Tehran-Tehran

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the charge of "attempting to block the street and impede the movement of vehicles".

Ultimately, following proceedings at the twenty-sixth branch of the Tehran Revolutionary Court presided over by the same judge, Nourmohammadzadeh was exiled to Kohnuj in Kerman province for a decade on the charge of "engaging in warfare," and received a five-year sentence for the charge of "collusion". Additionally, he was sentenced to one year in prison for "disturbing public order," resulting in a total of six years of imprisonment. This sentence was subsequently upheld by the 39th branch of the Supreme Court. This Azerbaijani prisoner held in Rajai Shahr prison, was subsequently transferred to Kerman's Kahanouj Prison on August 10, 2023, to serve 6 years imprisonment his 10-year exile.

Sahand's father has expressed grave concerns regarding the potential interference of security authorities in his son's sentencing, prompting him to call for an investigation by the head of the judiciary. According to Sahand's father, security agents prematurely announced the exile order for his son even before the judge had issued a ruling. In a firm protest against what he perceives as an unjust sentence, Sahand's father emphasised the severity of the punishment, which includes six years of imprisonment, ten years of exile, and even flogging for his son.

During a visit to the Moghaddas Court's Judgment Execution Branch, Sahand's father was troubled to learn from the judgement execution judge that the court's ruling was ambiguous. Consequently, he initiated a request to reopen the case proceedings under Article 474. This decision was prompted by a distressing pre-order call allegedly received from an individual purporting to be a security officer. This caller asserted that anyone admitting to "warfare" not only faced execution but also mandatory exile. Urging the head of the judiciary to conduct a thorough investigation into this alarming phone call, Sahand's father seeks clarity and justice for his son's case.

On October 29, 2023, Ali Razizadeh Nadarlu, an activist and resident of Tehran, commenced his one-year prison sentence at Evin prison. Following the confirmation of his sentence by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals of Tehran province, Nadarlu was admitted to the prison to serve his term. Upon his arrival, he reported to the prison authorities and

was subsequently transferred to the quarantine facility.

The trial of this activist took place on July 15, 2023, in Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran. On July 24, Nadarlu had been sentenced to a two-year imprisonment by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Salavati, on charges of "membership in an illegal group to undermine national security." Alongside the prison term, he received supplementary penalties, including a two-year prohibition on group membership and a travel ban. However, one year of his two year sentence was suspended for a five-year period.

On December 4, 2023, Saleh Mollaabbasi was apprehended by the intelligence force in Ahar city and sent to Ahar prison to serve his imprisonment. Earlier on July 19th, 2023, Mollaabbasi had been sentenced to 91 days of imprisonment on the charge of "Publishing false information to disturb public peace". This verdict was handed down by the Ahar 101 Criminal Branch presided over by Amir Khadavi.

Mollaabbasi's encounters with authorities are not new. On October 9, 2022, he was arrested at his sister's residence in Ahar city. He was later released from Tabriz Central Prison on November 9, 2022 after posting bail pending the conclusion of legal proceedings. During the raid on his residence, security forces seized computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones belonging to family members, and several books. On October 13, 2023, the sentence of 91 days of imprisonment of Saleh Malaabbasi, a resident of Ahar City, for the charge of "spreading falsehoods through cyberspace to disturb the public mind" was confirmed in the second branch of the appeals court of East Azerbaijan province.

Saleh Mollaabbasi was arrested by the security forces at his sister's house in Ahar City on October 9, 2023, and was released from Tabriz Central Prison on November 9 on bail. During the search of Molaabbasi's house, the officers confiscated the computers, laptops, tablets, and mobile phones of the family members and several book covers and took them. Prior to these incidents, Saleh Mollaabbasi had a documented history of threats, summons, arrests, and imprisonment due to his civil activities. In 2015, he, along with other activists

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including Esrafil Fathollahzadeh, Ebrahim Nouri, Morteza Shokri, Hamed Allahvirdipoor, and Soleyman Kazemi, received a 10-month prison sentence for protesting against an offensive television program called "Fitileh".

On November 18, 2023, Parviz Siyabi was transferred to the central prison of Ardabil city to resume his incarceration. Previously, on March 19, 2023, he had been granted medical leave due to the worsening of his illness. Despite the last decision of the 5-member Forensic Medical Board of Ardabil confirming his inability to withstand imprisonment, he was compelled to return to Ardabil Central Prison to serve out the remainder of his sentence following intervention by security forces in his case.

In the letter written by the General Department of Forensic Medicine of Ardabil province to the supervising judge of the prison, it is stated "According to the examination and expert advice, due to high blood pressure, cerebral vascular involvement, carotid stenosis, hearing loss, and prostate enlargement, the punishment of imprisonment currently aggravates the aforementioned disease he cannot bear the prison sentence". In a video recorded prior to his return to prison, Parviz Siyabi disclosed the involvement of security forces in altering the handling of his medical case, particularly regarding his inability to endure imprisonment.

Upon his return to prison on November 21, 2023, this 76-year-old Azerbaijani activist conveyed to his family and relatives that despite his objections, he was transferred to the 13th ward of Ardabil Central Prison. The 13th ward of Ardabil Central Prison operates at nearly double its nominal capacity, catering to both general and high-risk offenders. Given the prevalent physical ailments among its inhabitants, many requiring ongoing medical attention, the conditions within the ward are challenging.

This Azerbaijani activist was arrested on November 9, 2022, and transferred to Ward 16 of Ardabil Central Prison to serve his 6-year sentence. The Court of Appeal of Ardabil province overturned the verdict issued by the first court. The court has sentenced Parviz Siyabi to six years on the charge of "membership to illegal groups" and "propaganda against the system". With the application of Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, five years of this sentence can be enforced.

On November 20, 2023, Sina Yousefi, a lawyer and vice president of the Azerbaijan Human Rights Organization now living in Germany was sentenced to one year in prison by the Sixth Branch of Isfahan Revolutionary Court on the charge of "propaganda against the regime". On August 21, 2023, Yousefi was summoned to Branch 20 of the Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office in Isfahan (Complex 2) through an electronic notification on the Judiciary's online system.

Sina Yousefi posted an electronic notification on his Twitter account stating "Due to my reports on the illegality of the judge's actions, I have been summoned by Isfahan General and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office (also known as Isfahan House) on charges of propaganda against the system and disturbing the public mind".

During the nationwide Woman, Life, and Freedom protests in Iran on October 14th, Sina Yousefi took a significant step by announcing the establishment of a defense committee within the Human Rights Committee of the Bar Association in Iran. The purpose of this committee was to offer legal support to citizens detained during the 2022 protests. However, his activism led to his arrest by security forces on October 15th. Subsequently, he was released on bail which he remained on until the end of the judicial process on October 27th.

Previously, in a verdict issued by Branch 112 of the Criminal Court of Tabriz, Sina Yousefi was sentenced to 6 months in prison, subjected to a 2-year travel ban, and had his electronic devices confiscated, all on charges of "spreading lies in cyberspace". Additionally, Branch 112 imposed another sentence of 91 days in prison and a fine for the same charge. The mounting pressure forced him to leave Iran and seek refuge in Germany.

On November 31, 2023, Jafar Ebrahimi returned to Ghezel Hesar prison upon completing his medical leave. Previously on October 31, this Azerbaijani teacher and member of the Tehran Teachers' Union, had been granted medical leave due to his deteriorating physical condition and worsening blurred vision. He was temporarily released for medical evaluation and treatment.

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Ebrahimi was deprived of essential medical care and was denied transfer to a specialised hospital for treatment for a long time. On September 3, before being sent on medical leave, despite urgent medical needs, Ebrahimi was transferred, along with 12 other Evin prisoners, to a security cell in Ghezel Hesar Prison, housing prisoners of serious crimes. Despite the pressing need for hospitalisation and specialised medical attention, he was being kept in poor conditions within the prison.

Ebrahimi's health deteriorated to the extent that he required transfer to the prison's health centre. Subsequently, he sought a brief conversation with his wife to relay information about his condition from the central guard officer's room. However, he endured severe beatings and verbal abuse from the deputy officer and multiple prison staff members. The physical repercussions of the assault were evident, manifesting as injuries to his neck, shoulder, body, wrist, and forehead. Despite receiving a letter from the Ghezel Hesar Health Center highlighting the worsening state of Ebrahimi's physical health and urgently recommending his transfer to a specialist doctor to mitigate the risk of blindness stemming from complications of his illness, prison officials persisted in denying the essential medical intervention required.

Jafar Ebrahimi was apprehended by security agents on April 30th, 2022, and initially confined to the Ministry of Intelligence's detention centre within Evin prison (Wing 209). Despite his relatives posting bail for his release, security forces impeded any possibility of his temporary freedom. By early November 2022, he received a five-year prison sentence, accompanied by a two-year prohibition on engaging in activities or affiliating with groups, alongside a travel restriction. These penalties were levied against him for charges including "assembly and collusion" and "propaganda against the regime".

On December 13, 2023, Armita Pavir, a student activist and an expelled student from Shahid Madani University of Azerbaijan was sentenced to a total of 22 months and 17 days in prison. According to the verdict sent to Pavir, this Azerbaijani was sentenced to 15 months and 1 day for the charge of "insulting the leadership" and 7 months and 16 days for the charge of "propaganda against the regime".



On November 6, 2023, Pavir communicated with her family via an audio file recorded from Tabriz prison where she spoke about her ongoing hunger strike. She reiterated her decision to protest against the illegal conduct of Tabriz prison officials towards her. Armita embarked on the hunger strike in response to the prison authorities' unlawful actions, particularly their failure to adhere to regulations concerning the segregation of prisoners based on the nature of their offences and their neglect in processing her case.

Previously, on September 2, 2023, Armita Pavir, an expelled student from the Molecular Biology program at Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, received a summons through the judiciary's electronic system. She was directed to appear before the first branch of the Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office in Tabriz. Armita's involvement in protests the previous year had resulted in her losing her job, being expelled from the university, and spending over a month in prison.

Additionally, this activist faced another charge related to "disruption of public order and tranquillity and disturbing public minds" for which she was summoned to the Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office in East Azerbaijan's Azarshahr (Tufargan) city.

Pavir had been previously arrested on October 30th, 2022, during nationwide protests in Iran. Security forces detained her at the university's entrance gate and on December 8th, 2021, she was released from Tabriz Central Prison after posting bail. It is important to note that this student also received a punishment of a one-year suspension from school in 2020. She was one of the students protesting and holding the Iranian government responsible for shooting down the Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 with two surface-to-air missiles.

On December 15, 2023, Peyman Ebrahimi was sentenced to a total of 22 months and 17 days in prison by Branch 1 of Tabriz Revolutionary Court for "propaganda activity against the system of the Islamic Republic through publishing images and content against the system in cyberspace" and "insulting the position of the Supreme Leader".

Ebrahimi, a civil activist and Azerbaijani dance instructor was arrested by security agents on August 26, 2023, and despite numerous requests from his family and relatives, the investi-

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gator refused to accept the order and issue a release order. His trial was held on December 20, 2023, on accusations of "propaganda against the Islamic Republic" and "inviting chaos through cyberspace". On October 25, 2023, Ebrahimi was temporarily released from the central prison of Tabriz by posting bail until the end of the proceedings.

On December 31, 2023, Mohammad Maleki received a summons from the prosecutor of the first branch of Zanjan to commence serving his prison sentence. According to the summons, Maleki was required to present himself at this branch on January 6, 2023, to begin executing the sentence. On December 19, 2023, a sentence of 10 years and 3 months of imprisonment for Mohammad Maleki was confirmed by Branch 11 of the Zanjan Court of Appeals, presided over by Yadullah Taremi and Ali Khanmohammadi.

Maleki, devoid of the right to legal representation, underwent trial at the second branch of the Zanjan Revolutionary Court led by Azizullah Heidary. He faced three charges, resulting in a verdict of 8 months' imprisonment for "propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran," 3 years and 7 months for "collusion against national security" and 6 years and one day for "operating the Zanjan youth channel to disrupt internal security".

Mohammad Maleki, a resident of Zanjan city, was apprehended by IRGC intelligence agents on December 17, 2023, coinciding with the Women, Life, Freedom protests anniversary. Following his arrest, he was confined in the organisation's detention centre for 15 days before being transferred to Zanjan prison. Throughout his detention, Maleki has been denied access to legal representation and visits from his family.

On December 24, 2023, Abdullah Ansari, one of the leaders of the Azerbaijan Trakhtor team in Ardabil province and Ebrahim Rezaei were acquitted by the first branch of the Revolutionary Court of Tabriz. The same court has sentenced Karim Ismailzadeh to 6 months in prison.

Previously, Abdullah Ansari received a notice summoning him to appear at the first branch of the Revolutionary Court of Tabriz on December 20, 2023, at 10:00 am. In an effort to inform others, Ansari shared this notice on his Instagram page, revealing that he faces charges of "gathering and colluding to commit a crime against internal/foreign security"

and "propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran" as declared by the first branch of the Revolutionary Court of Tabriz.

On August 16, 2023, Abdullah Ansari, along with Ebrahim Rezaei and Karim Ismailzadeh, were arrested and subjected to physical assault at the entrance of Yadegar Emam stadium. Subsequently, on August 17, 2023, they were summoned to the 10th branch of the General and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office to address the charges against them. Following their transfer to Tabriz city, they were temporarily released on August 19, 2023, by order of the aforementioned branch, pending the conclusion of legal proceedings.

On December 24, 2023, Ashkan Saadatmehr was sentenced to 7 years of prison by Branch 108 of Shahid Beheshti Criminal Court of Urmia. He has been sentenced to 5 years in prison for the charge of "insulting islamic sanctities" and 2 years in prison for the charge of "spreading lies in cyberspace".

Saadatmehr was arrested by the security forces at his workplace on September 20th, 2023, and transferred from the detention centre of the Intelligence Department to the central prison of Urmia. On October 8, 2023, he was released from Urmia Central Prison after posting bail until the end of the proceedings. The accusations of this Azerbaijani activist in the preliminary stage of the proceedings was "propaganda against the Islamic Republic" and "insulting the holy things".

Previously, Ashkan Saadatmehr was arrested on September 24, 2022, during the nationwide protests of Woman, life and Freedom and was temporarily released on September 26. Also, on November 27, 2023, he was summoned to court.

On December 17, 2023, Reza Shahabi, an Azerbaijani labour rights activist incarcerated in Evin prison and a member of the board of directors of the Tehran Bus Company workers' union, was transported to the hospital due to a deterioration in his health. After being examined by the prison doctor and experiencing high blood pressure and severe headaches, he was transferred to Taleghani Hospital for further evaluation.

Following medical assessments and examinations by hospital doctors, Shahabi was subse-

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quently returned to Evin prison. On October 17, 2023, despite the medical commission's confirmation that Reza Shahabi required urology and cardiac examinations, as well as spine surgery, authorities failed to authorize his transfer to the hospital for necessary medical procedures.

In a report submitted in support of this activist by the workers' union, it stated "The surgeon specializing in spinal surgery informed the medical commission that due to the protrusion of the 5th and 4th vertebrae and the narrowing of the spinal canal, Shahabi needs urgent surgery. The medical commission also announced in a letter from the prison health department that to complete the medical file for surgery, they need the examination of a urologist and cardiologist at Rasool Akram Hospital".

Previously, this prominent Azerbaijani political prisoner and labor activist penned a letter to the labor representatives at the International Labor Organization summit. In this letter, he urged for the expulsion of the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran from the summit.

Arrested on May 2nd, 2022, by security forces and later transferred to Evin prison in Tehran, Reza Shahabi was convicted by the Revolutionary Court and sentenced to six years behind bars. The charges against him included "propaganda against the system and society, and collusion with the intent to commit a crime against national security".

Moreover, he received additional penalties, such as a travel ban, prohibition from political party membership, restriction from using social networks, and a mandate to refrain from residing in Tehran and its adjacent provinces for a period of two years. This verdict was upheld by the Tehran Province Appeals Court.

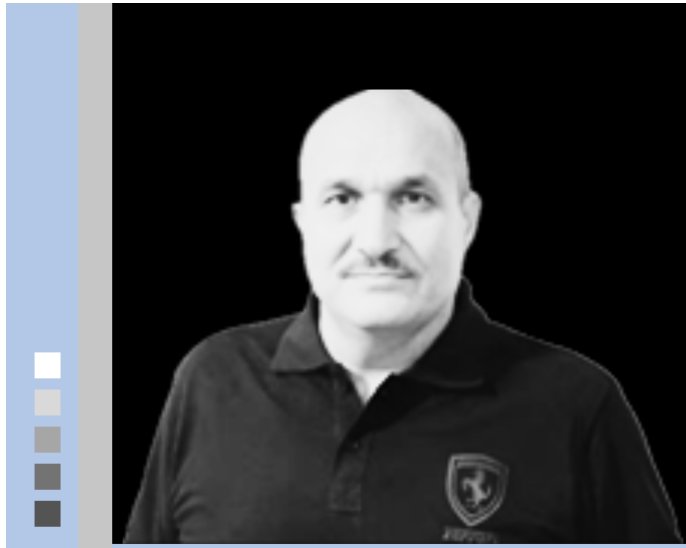
# Exiled Individuals

## 4.1 Exiled Individuals

The Iranian government employs a strategy of relocating prominent human rights defenders and activists to remote areas within the country, effectively restricting their capacity to participate in and oversee social activities. This approach aims to diminish their influence and role in civil society initiatives by transferring them to distant and less reachable regions.

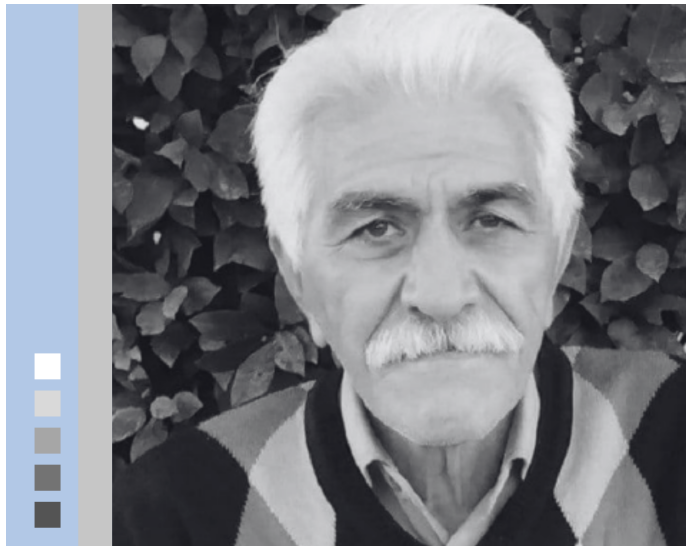
The exile sentence of Abbas Lesani was increased by the Court of Appeals of Ardabil Province. Previously Abbas Lesani was sentenced to 2 years of mandatory stay in Yazd. Branch 1 of the Court of Appeal of Ardabil province has increased his sentence by one-third due to non-compliance with the sentence of 2 years of mandatory residence in Yazd city. Abbas Lesani after serving four years and two months of imprisonment in wing 7 of Ardabil prison was transferred to Yazd City on February 21, 2023, to serve his 2-year exile in Yazd City. However, Lesani returned to Ardabil by disobeying the sentence of exile to Yazd City. Abbas Lesani is from Ardabil city.

He was arrested on January 15th, 2019. Lasani was sentenced to 10 years in prison and two years of exile to Yazd for the charge of "forming a group to disrupt the security of the country" and for the charge of "acting against national security" and "inciting and encouraging the Turks in West Azerbaijan province through speeches and interviews" with the media against the regime. He was



released because of the "Amnesty and Reduction of Public Punishment" order. On November 16, 2023, Akbar Azad, a writer and activist who was on leave due to his son's illness, went to Darreh Shahr city of Ilam province to serve the sentence of 2 years of compulsory residence in this city.

Relatives of Azad have revealed that before departing for Darreh Shahr to fulfill the mandatory stay period, he visited the law enforcement branch of Baharestan City. There, he reported the unlawful conduct and the probing of his beliefs by interrogators at the Darreh Shahr Intelligence Department to the judge of this branch. He made it clear that he would consent to prolonging his forced stay in the city if such behaviour ceased to occur. The judge granted his request to report to one of the police centres in Derreh Shahr city instead of the intelligence department.



On August 29, 2023, he visited the Intelligence Office in Darreh Shahr for identification, experiencing a prolonged delay at the entrance before being transferred to a detention

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centre after approximately 4 hours.

During approximately one hour of detention, facing intense heat without proper ventilation and cooling, and deteriorating health, Azad was eventually moved to an interrogation room. Despite facing illegitimate actions by security forces, he refrained from answering both written and verbal questions. Protesting the illegal interrogation, Akbar Azad declared the illegality, stating, "Your interrogation is illegal and there is no freedom of speech for me to state my opinions without punishment. Due to this, I will not answer your questions verbally or in a written manner".

In an audio file, Azad shared insights into his conditions in exile, revealing harassment and mistreatment by intelligence officials in Darreh Shahr. On July 30th, around 19:30, expressing his objection, Azad left the Intelligence Office. According to judicial authorities, Azad is obligated to present himself monthly at the Intelligence Office in Darreh Shahr for signature and attendance, a provision exploited by security officials for unlawful harassment and attempted interrogation. This 67-year-old activist who has health problems such as diabetes was initially exiled to Darreh Shahr on June 11th, 2023. However, due to the severe health condition of his son, who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis (MS), requires constant care, and uses a wheelchair, he returned to Tehran. This Azerbaijani political activist, writer, researcher, translator, and member of the Iranian Writers' Association, as well as a member of the PEN Club in France, had a history of detention and conviction due to his peaceful activities.

On International Mother Language Day in February 2014, Akbar Azad, along with several other Azerbaijani activists, was arrested in Baharestan-Eslamshahr. Among these activists, Behnam Sheikhi, Hamid Manafi Nadarlu, Alireza Farshi, Akbar Azad, and Ali Babalu were each sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment and 2 years of exile in various cities. Following their prison terms, each of these four civil activists had been summoned to the courthouse to endure the exile residence sentence.

# Capital Punishment

## 5.1 Capital Punishment

While government news agencies claim that many of these individuals were executed for charges such as drug smuggling and murder, Amnesty International has strongly denounced the death penalty, considering it an inhumane sentence. This organization advocates for the abolition of all execution verdicts in Iran.

Ethnic minorities in Iran have a higher percentage of death penalty statistics compared to other parts of Iran. The research and monitoring of Iran Human Rights Organization shows that in 2023, at least 171 Baloch prisoners were executed which includes 21% of all executions in Iran.

On March 7, 2023, the sentence of Hadi Hadikhanlou, a prisoner previously condemned to death on charges related to drug crimes was carried out in Qazvin prison. He had been arrested three years prior to the execution.

On March 14, 2014, the sentence of Behzad Bidrang, a prisoner previously condemned to death was carried out in Qazvin prison. Bidrang had been arrested two years prior on charges related to drug crimes and was subsequently sentenced to death by a judicial authority. Behzad Bidrang, 42 years old, father of two children, is from Ajabshir city.



# Summoned People

## 6.1 Summoned People

Iranian Intelligence agents frequently engage in illegal summoning practices with activists. Despite Iranian law mandating official written summonses, these agencies often resort to informal methods such as telephone calls or verbal messages to communicate with individuals regarding their activities. This unlawful summoning tactic is aimed at intimidating political and social activists, thereby impeding their participation in various endeavors.

On October 2, 2023, Esmail Ahmadi received an order to appear at the first branch of the Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office of Varzeghan City within five days from the date of receiving the notice. The accusation of this Azerbaijani civil activist is "insulting the sanctities of Islam", "inciting people to commit crimes/crimes against internal/external security", "connection with enemy networks", "Publication of lies" and "Propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran".

On August 2, 2023, this Azerbaijani labour rights activist was detained by security forces in Varzeghan, East Azerbaijan Province. Ahmadi was arrested for protesting the working conditions of miners in the Sungun copper mine in East Azerbaijan.

He was released on August 24 from Ahar prison. The charges levelled against this civil activist during the hearing in the prosecutor's office included "disturbance in public order" and "insulting the officials of the copper company".

On October 19, 2023, despite the decision of the investigator at Branch 7 of the Evin Prosecutor's Office to issue a restraining order, the case of Seyyed Mohammadreza Faghihi, an Azerbaijani lawyer, was forwarded to Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on charges of collusion. Mahmoud Behzadi Rad, Faghihi's defense lawyer, provided an update on the current status of his client's case. He indicated that the judicial opinion of the investigator at Branch 7 of the Shahid Moghdas courthouse was to issue a restraining order following the submission of Faghihi's final defense.



**Mohammadreza  
Faghihi**

Tehran-Tehran



**Shahin Barzgar**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Vahid Abhari**

East Azerbaijan-Tabriz



**Gholamreza  
Asghari**

Ardabil - Ardabil



**Behzad Dashti**

Ardabil-Ardabil



**Esmail  
Ahmadi**

East Azerbaijan-Varzeghan



**Mostafa Karimi**

Zanjan- Zanjan



**Amir Sattari**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz



**Jafar  
Ismailzadeh**

East Azerbaijan- Tabriz

Behzadi Rad mentioned that despite the issuance of a non-prosecution order, the case was not closed. Judge Salvati requested the client to draft and submit a letter of commitment along with an expression of remorse, which Faghihi agreed to. In the letter, he pledged to abide by the laws of the country as he had done in the past and to comply with regulations. However, the head of Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court refused to accept this letter because it allegedly lacked an explicit expression of remorse. Consequently, the case remains under investigation.

Previously, Faghihi had been ordered to appear in the 15th branch of the Revolutionary Court on October 10th to defend against impeachment charges according to a notice he received through the electronic system of court. He was summoned to branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on charges of assembly and collusion and disturbance of public order as well.

He was initially arrested by the security forces on October 12, 2022, during the gathering of lawyers in protest against the "violation of the rights of protesters and Article 27 of the Constitution" in front of the Central Lawyers' Association located in Argentina Square, Tehran, and on October 25, he was released on bail until the end of the proceedings.

Faghihi was sentenced by Branch 29 of the Revolutionary Court to a total of more than 10 years of imprisonment and occupational and social exclusions. Branch 36 of the Tehran province Court of Appeal upheld this sentence.

On November 12 2023, Shahin Barzgar, an Azerbaijani civil activist was summoned to the Intelligence Department of Tabriz. However, Barzegar considered the telephone summons of the Tabriz city intelligence department as illegal and announced that he will not appear anywhere without a judicial order. Barzegar is a law student and the head of the Azerbaijani dance group Ayil. He has been repeatedly threatened, summoned, arrested, and imprisoned by the security agencies.

On November 12, 2023, Vahid Abhari received a summons to the Tabriz city intelligence department via a phone call. Abhari deemed the telephone summons from the Tabriz city intelligence department to be illegal and declared that he would not comply with it unless accompanied by a judicial order. On November 24, 2023, Behzad Abbaszadeh was sum-

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moned to the intelligence department of Ghoshachay (Miandoab city) in west Azerbaijan. There is no further information about the reason behind this summons.

On December 2, 2023, Amir Sattari and Jafar Ismailzadeh were summoned to the East Azerbaijan intelligence department.

According to a summons, Gholamreza Asghari, a union activist and member of the Ardabil Teachers' Trade Union Center, has been summoned to appear in the second branch of the Revolutionary Court of Ardabil City. In the electronic notification issued by the mentioned branch of the court, he has been accused of "propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran," "participating in and organizing illegal gatherings against national security," "publishing false information and lies in cyberspace," and "managing gatherings aimed at disrupting the country's security".

On August 29, Asghari was detained and on September 2nd, he was released after posting bail from Ardabil prison until the conclusion of the proceedings. Bahram Namati, a teacher and member of the Teachers' Union in Ardabil, provided information regarding the detention of this Azerbaijani teacher, stating "Gholamreza Asghari is a retired teacher and an active member of the teachers union in Ardabil and the country". Previously, Asghari was arrested during the Women, Life, Freedom protests. He was detained on October 22nd, 2022, in Ardabil and was released on October 29th, 2022.

On December 24, 2023, Behzad Dashti received a summons to the Intelligence Department and Security Police Department via a phone call. Dashti considered the phone call from the security forces of Ardabil to be illegal and declared that he would not comply with it unless accompanied by a judicial order.

On December 17, 2023, Mostafa Karimi was summoned and briefed on his charges by the second investigation branch of the General and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office of Zanjan. He was subsequently released on bail pending the conclusion of the proceedings. He stands accused of "Propaganda against the regime in cyberspace".

# Suspension

## 7.1 Suspension

Organizations or individuals perceived as an opposition or anti-government entity face various forms of punishment, including suspensions. These suspension penalties can manifest in different dimensions, such as employment suspension, activity suspension, academic suspension, and more. These measures severely restrict freedom of expression and association, curtailing citizens' ability to organize, advocate, and express dissenting opinions.

### 7.1.1 Activity Suspension

The Iranian government often resorts to suspending activities as a method to suppress dissent and control opposition movements. This tactic involves halting, either temporarily or permanently, activities that are perceived as undesirable or threatening to the regime. Organizations, media outlets, and civil society groups critical of government policies often face arbitrary suspensions, censorship, or even outright bans.

Dr. Vali Lotfdokht, an Azerbaijani writer and director hailing from Urmia City, has been barred from engaging in artistic activities for a duration of two years by the General Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance of West Azerbaijan. The case of this Azerbaijani writer and director has been forwarded to the Urmia Revolution-



ary Court. However, the details of the proceedings remain undisclosed due to pressure from the Department of Culture and Education. Lotfdokht's work "Shahriar" was staged in Urmia and received a warm welcome from the local community. However, the performances of the last two days were cancelled by the Department of Culture and Guidance due to the Azerbaijani dance performed by the actors.

## 7.1.2 Academic Suspension

Educational institutions, including universities, wield considerable influence in anti-government protests. Consequently, civil activists often find themselves facing pressure on various fronts, including their academic careers. Intelligence forces, seeking to quell civil activities, exert pressure on universities to impose academic suspensions on activist students as a means of suppressing dissent.



On November 14, 2023, Soroush Akbari Ardabili, a Ph.D. student in general veterinary medicine at Urmia University and the former secretary of the Iranian Islamic Students Association of this university, faced multiple bans from entering the university in October 2023. These bans occurred while he was engaged in scientific research

and was on the verge of defending his thesis.

In November 2023, Akbari was prohibited from entering the university without written notification and for an unspecified duration after his student card was confiscated by the head of university security. Subsequently, despite completing all his courses, two charges were levied against him by the university's disciplinary committee. These charges were titled "defamation and dissemination of falsehoods" and "inciting chaos and disorder".



# Harassment and Assaulted Individuals

## 8.1 Harassment and Assaulted Individuals

In Iran, government-initiated harassment and assault against individuals occur with alarming frequency. Those targeted often include dissidents, activists, journalists, and marginalized community members. The tactics employed range from surveillance and intimidation to arbitrary arrests and unfair detentions. Speaking out against government policies or advocating for human rights can result in physical and psychological assault, torture, and/or disappearance. These actions not only violate fundamental freedoms but also defy international human rights standards. Despite the pervasive risks, courageous individuals persist in their pursuit of justice and accountability, striving for a society where all citizens can freely exercise their rights without fear of reprisal.

A citizen of Tabriz named Asad Pakrouh was subjected to a severe assault by officers of the 1st Intelligence Base of Tabriz. This resulted in injuries and bleeding to his head and face. Upon notifying his family and urging them to follow up on his condition at the institution, the officers proceeded to insult and threaten them. Subsequently, two members of the family, Jabrael Pakrouh and Farhad Pakrouh were also subjected to violence.

They were attacked with pepper spray, a shocker, as well as punches and kicks, resulting in severe injuries.

The violence inflicted upon these individuals has been severe, leading to significant physical repercussions. Jabrael Pakrouh has endured three surgeries due to injuries sustained from the officers' assault and blows to the head.

According to statements from Jabrael Pakrouh captured in a video, he has been admitted to the neurology department of Razi Hospital in Tabriz multiple times following the incident. Despite the considerable time that has passed, he continues to experience blurred vision, lack of balance while standing and walking, hearing impairment, drooping of the right eye, and muscle weakness throughout his body. This relentless suffering has severely disrupted his health and ability to lead a normal life, highlighting the profound impact of such cruel behavior.

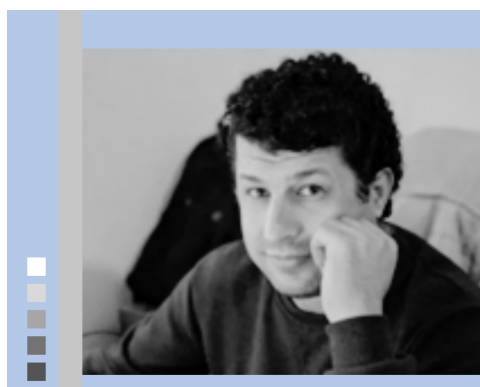
These three individuals were arrested simultaneously following an assault by officers of the 1st Intelligence Base of Tabriz and subsequently taken to the 14th police station of Tabriz. During their day-long detention, they were denied access to both medical services and legal representation. Upon their release and subsequent filing of a complaint against the offending agents, the case was examined initially at Branch 9 of Tabriz General and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office. It was later forwarded to the 108th Branch of Tabriz Criminal Court under the leadership of Gholamreza Mokhtari Sarai.

Despite the confirmation of the violent acts perpetrated by three police officers named Youssef Safarian Choplujah, Mohammed Alinejad, and Saeed Kurd Oladi against these citizens, they were subjected to threats and ultimately sentenced to pay a fine. Additionally, two of the three people were handed down six-month prison sentences on charges of "insulting and disobeying the orders of government officials".

On December 26, 2023, Intelligence forces attempted to contact Alireza Farshi Dizaj Yekanli, an Azerbaijani human rights activist, but failed. Subsequently, they called his elderly mother and sister. Expressing his outrage at these illegal calls, Farshi stated, "Cease this cruelty! By what law do you justify contacting my 80-year-old mother and my sister?"

May God's eternal curse be upon you for disrespecting the memory of the martyr, his wife, and child!"

On December 25, 2023, Yekanli revealed that the intelligence department had initiated a new case against him, accusing him of "propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran". This case was opened in the first



investigation branch of the General and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office of Baharestan, Tehran province.

On September 4th, 2023, Yekanli had also received a phone call summoning him to the Cyber Police in Marand, East Azerbaijan. The officers from the Cyber Police in Marand requested his presence at the Marand Police Intelligence, under the command of Sergeant Rasti. Farshi refused to comply with the summons, citing perceived illegality.

It's worth noting that Alireza Farshi Dizaj Yekanli was previously released from Evin Prison after serving three years and three months of his four-year sentence, as part of the "Amnesty and Reduction of Public Punishment" order. Initially, he was sentenced to two years of imprisonment and two years in exile by the 54th branch of the Tehran Court of Appeal. This sentence stemmed from his participation in the "World Mother Language Day" ceremony in Baharestan City, Tehran. Additionally, he received a three-year and six-month prison term from Branch 36 of the Court of Appeal of Tehran Province, on charges of "gathering and collusion against national security" and "propaganda against the regime". His arrest occurred on July 21, 2019, leading to his incarceration in Evin Prison.

Farshi was born in 1978 and graduated in computer programming from Sharif and Tehran Universities of Technology. However, he was expelled as an instructor at Jolfa International University. He is also the founder of the campaign of the Turkish Library for villages in Iran.

On October 15, 2023, Roya Zakeri, a young female protester, after being subjected to physical assault in Tabriz

and subsequently apprehended and transported to Razi Mental Hospital in Tabriz via ambulance. She endured harassment from officers, colloquially referred to as the "Hijab police," and bravely protested against their misconduct. Roya recounted a prior arrest by authorities last year, during which she embarked on a five-day hunger strike



while in prison. However, this time, following her arrest, law enforcement officials deemed Roya's protestations as delusional and consequently transferred her to Razi Psychiatric Hospital in Tabriz. Zakeri, aged 31 and from Marand, holds a master's degree in computer engineering.

# Ban on Issuing ID Documents for Children

## 9.1 Ban on Issuing ID Documents for Children

The prohibition on issuing ID documents for children, especially in marginalized communities, stands as a grave human rights concern in Iran. By denying children access



to identification documents, fundamental rights are violated, and substantial barriers are erected against their access to crucial services such as education and healthcare. Some Azerbaijani children are denied the issuance of ID documents solely because their parents

have chosen Azerbaijani Turkish names for them. The civil registration office of Tabriz city has opposed the issuance of a birth certificate for an Azerbaijani child named Baycan Jabraeili who was born on October 7, 2023.

On November 16, 2023, the family of Huntay Merhalibeglou in protest against the non-issuance of the birth certificate, held a symbolic birthday celebration for Huntay in front of the civil registry office of Jolfa city. During the gathering held in front of the Jolfa City Registry Office, the family and relatives of Huntay protested with placards bearing messages such as "Choosing a child's name is one of the basic rights of citizenship," "My name is Huntay," and a picture of activist Yorush Mehralibiglou, who has been detained

in the Intelligence Department's detention centre.

Taymaz Mehralibglou, the father of Huntay, despite six years of exhausting all legal procedures and protesting through administrative and judicial channels, has been unable to obtain a birth certificate for his son. This has resulted in numerous challenges for his son, including difficulties related to access to medical treatment and education.

The Ardabil Province Civil Registry Department has rejected the Turkish name "Dolun Ay Sadeghifar" for the newly born Azerbaijani baby. The department cited the absence of this name from the list of authorised names in the civil registration system as the reason for its opposition.

# Recommendations

## 10.1 Recommendations

The Iranian government must immediately halt the arbitrary arrests and detentions of individuals, especially political dissidents, human rights activists, journalists, and members of marginalized communities. Detainees should be granted full due process rights, including access to legal representation and fair trials.

Moreover, Iran does not enforce segregation laws in prisons located in minority regions. Ensuring strict compliance with laws and regulations governing the segregation of various types of crimes within Iran's prison system is paramount. This guarantees that individuals serving sentences are housed appropriately according to the nature and severity of their offenses, thereby fostering safety, security, and effective inmate rehabilitation. By segregating individuals convicted of different types of offenses, such as violent crimes, drug-related offenses, or white-collar crimes, authorities can better manage the prison population and offer tailored rehabilitation programs to meet the needs of each group. This approach aids in maintaining order within the prison environment and enhances the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system in facilitating rehabilitation and reducing recidivism.

Furthermore, it is crucial for the Iranian government to abolish the death penalty and enact a moratorium on all executions. Capital punishment represents a flagrant violation of fundamental human rights and goes against the inherent dignity and right to life of every individual. Abolishing the death penalty is essential for promoting and upholding



human rights standards in Iran and fostering a more just and humane society.

The Iranian government must uphold the rights to freedom of expression and association for all citizens, particularly those advocating for human rights and civil liberties. This entails respecting and safeguarding activists and dissenting voices from harassment, intimidation, and censorship.

Moreover, Iranian Intelligence agencies must strictly adhere to legal summoning procedures as outlined by Iranian law. Summonses should be formal, in writing, and delivered in accordance with due process rights. Any informal or unlawful summoning practices, such as telephone calls or verbal messages, must be immediately discontinued to ensure the protection of individuals' rights and the rule of law.

The Iranian government must refrain from imposing unjust suspensions, whether academic, civil activities or employment-related, based on individuals' political beliefs or activism. Equal access to education and employment opportunities should be ensured for all citizens, without discrimination or punishment based on their political affiliations.

To combat harassment and assault initiated by the government, Iranian authorities must take decisive action. Perpetrators of such acts should be held accountable, and victims should have access to avenues for seeking justice and redress.

Additionally, it is imperative that all children, regardless of their background or ethnicity, have access to identification documents. Denying ID certificates to newborn children constitutes a violation of their rights and can significantly impact their access to essential services and protections.

Contact Information

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