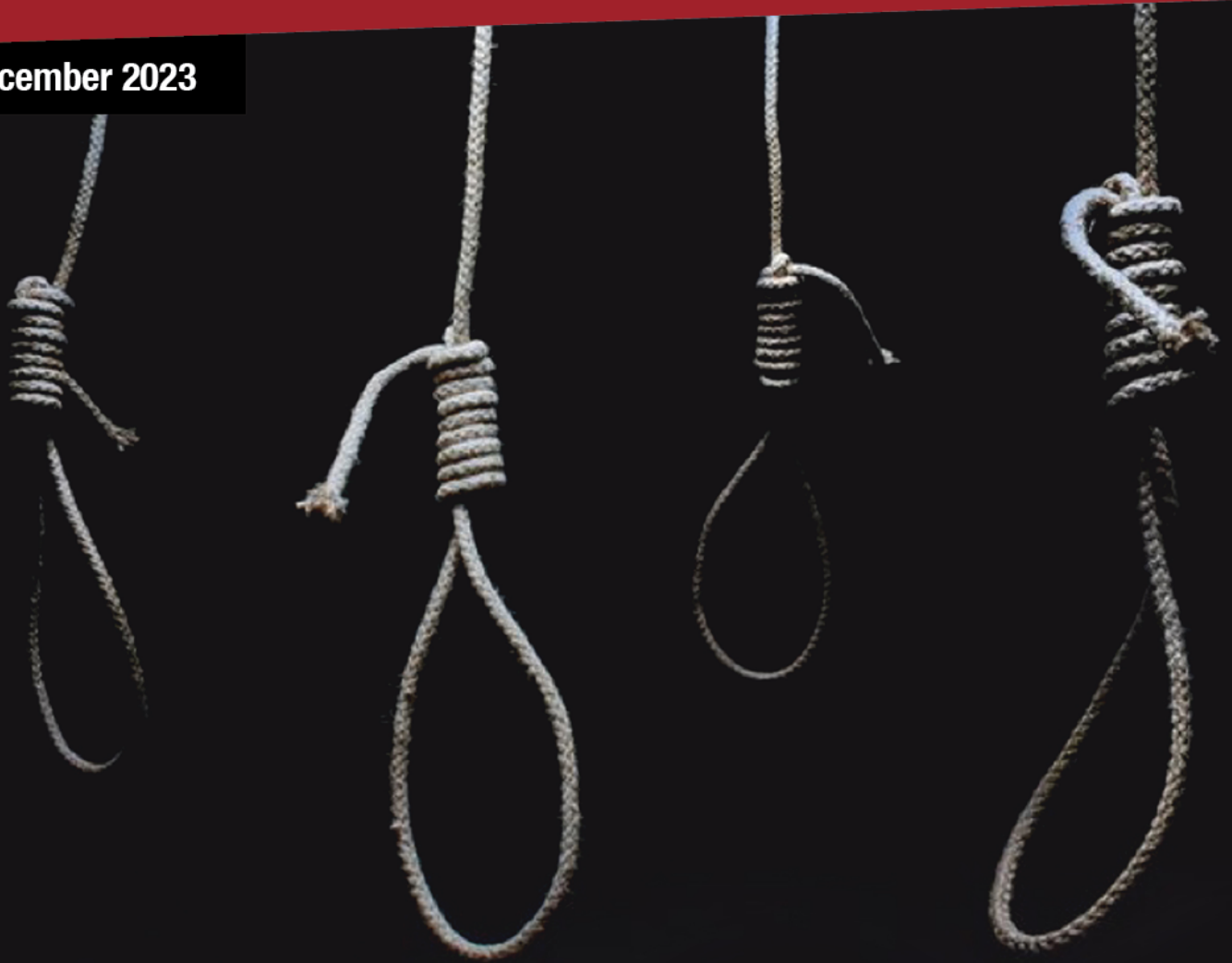


Submission to the Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



The Death Penalty in the Islamic Republic of Iran

December 2023



Center for
**HUMAN
RIGHTS**
in Iran

The Death Penalty in the Islamic Republic of Iran
Report by the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) for the UN OHCHR
Covering the period September 2022 - December 2023

The Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) remains one of the world's leading executioners in both absolute numbers and per capita numbers. The number of executions has dramatically increased in the IRI over the last two years. More than 576 executions were carried out in the country in 2022, which represents an 83 percent increase over 2021. Executions so far tallied in 2023 represent a further significant increase.

Executions are carried out by hanging in Iran, and the IRI continues to carry out public executions. Between October 10, 2022, and October 8, 2023, at least seven executions were reportedly carried out in public. Individuals were executed in prisons across Iran, including Rajaee Shahr and Ghezel Hesar (Karaj); Oroumiyeh, Ardabil, and Dastgerd (Isfahan); Vakilabad (Mashhad); Neishabur, Adelabad (Shiraz); Torbat-e-Jam; Rasht; Yazd; Birjand; Qazvin; Minab; Bandar Abbas; Khorramabad; Zahedan; Arak; and Iranshahr prisons.

The largest number of these executions were carried out for drug offenses in which minority groups have been disproportionately targeted. Minority communities have not only been long oppressed in the IRI, they have also been particularly active in the anti-government protests that have roiled Iran since the September 2022 killing in state custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Jina Amini days after her arrest for an allegedly improper hijab. The IRI's intensified use of the death penalty, especially amongst these minority communities, and its increasing use against protesters, is clearly designed to instill fear and silence protest in the country.

In addition, the application of the death penalty in the IRI systematically violates international law and standards regarding capital punishment in numerous ways. These include:

- **Use of the death penalty against protesters, activists, and others for the exercise of their right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression** (*see cases below*). According to analysis by CHRI's Senior Legal Advisor, in all of the recent cases concerning protesters that involved the death penalty, the defendants were denied a

fair judicial process and their prosecutions were marked by the following: 1) None of the cases were defended by independent lawyers in the investigation stage; 2) In the trial stage, only a few had their chosen lawyer defending them in the Revolutionary Courts and in front of the Supreme Court during the appeal process; 3) None of the protesters sentenced to death were tried in civil courts for political crimes in front of a jury; 4) These cases were based on coerced confessions and self-incriminating statements obtained under torture while held in solitary confinement.

- **The execution of juveniles** (*see cases below*).

The IRI remains one of the few countries in the world that continues to execute children under the age of 18. In 2022, at least 6 juvenile offenders were known to be executed, and so far in 2023, at least two juvenile offenders were known to be executed in Iran, as detailed below. According to [Amnesty International](#), Iranian authorities executed at least 73 juvenile offenders between 2005 and 2015.

- **Severe judicial violations typically accompany death penalty cases**, including:

- Executions that systematically and severely violate due process and fair trial rights, including denial of access to independent counsel; denial of full or timely access to case files for the defense lawyer; and convictions in capital cases based on the “evidence” of forced “confessions” that have been extracted under torture, even when such confessions have been reported in court as such and retracted. (*See Annexes at the end of this report for a further discussion of these issues.*)

- **Executions for crimes that do not meet the threshold of the “most serious” crimes**, (which comprise the overwhelming majority of capital cases in Iran) including:

- Drug offenses (this represents the majority of executions in the IRI; Amnesty International has [reported](#) that executions for drug-related offences made up two-thirds of all the executions carried out in Iran in the first half of 2023 and have predominantly impacted people from marginalized and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.)
- Sex-related offenses, including LGBTQ relations/activities
- Religious crimes (such as cursing the prophet, apostasy and heresy)
- Political crimes, including vague, catch-all charges such as *Moharebeh* (“waging war against God”), “spreading corruption on Earth”, and insurrection (*see cases below*)

- Cyber-crimes, economic offenses, and a variety of other (less commonly used charges) that do not meet the “most serious crimes” threshold (See <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/iranpdm758ang-2.pdf>)
- **The execution of women** (*see aggregate numbers in the Case Details section below*)
 - The execution of women in the IRI raises many serious intersectional issues. Chief among them is the issue of widespread [child marriage](#) in Iran (girls can be married as young as age 9, and younger with the consent of the male guardian and judge) and the [lack of protections for violence against women and girls](#), especially domestic violence. Many women who are convicted of murder in Iran are victims of child marriage or domestic abuse who have killed their husbands in the context of these crimes against them. The use of capital punishment in murder cases involving women often thus profoundly violates multiple international standards regarding the death penalty, and reflects the oppressive and discriminatory treatment of women in the IRI, including within the judicial system. Please see this extended excerpt from an extensive [interview CHRI conducted with leading Iranian human rights activist Atena Daemi](#) in **Annex 5** of this report.
 - In addition, differential and discriminatory treatment of women in the criminal code makes women far more vulnerable to capital offenses (for example, in the case of alleged adultery), as detailed in [CHRI’s Fact Sheet on women](#).
- **Disproportionate use of capital punishment against minorities**
 - The death penalty is used by the IRI to target [oppressed minority groups](#) such as [Kurds](#) and Baluchis, for example Amnesty International [reports](#) that in 2023 the Baluch ethnic minority accounted for approximately 20 percent of the executions in Iran while comprising only 5 percent of the population.
- **Persecution of lawyers who address violations**
 - Lawyers who address violations regarding due process and fair trial rights, or regarding issues of torture and forced “confessions,” risk arrest and imprisonment. (*See Annexes at the end of this report for further discussion of these issues.*) For a recent example, **Amirhossein Koozkan**, the lawyer representing executed protester [Mohammad Mehdi Karami](#), was detained for nearly four months until his [release on bail](#) on December 15, 2023. He has been charged with sham national security crimes. An informed source close to

the lawyer's family told HRANA: “Mr. Koohken was transferred from Central Penitentiary to Kachuei Prison in Karaj on Thursday, November 23rd. The accusations against him are propaganda against the state and forming a group with the intention to disrupt national security.” Koohkan was arrested on August 28, 2023, after being summoned to court in the city of Karaj, west of Tehran.

- **Impunity for responsible state actors in cases of death penalty violations**
 - Despite the substantial amount of independent evidence regarding the unlawful application of the death penalty in the IRI and the severe judicial violations that typically accompany these cases, no judicial official in Iran has been held accountable. Indeed, there are no available measures to prevent violations or to provide effective remedies for violations.

CASE DETAILS

Political executions in Iran since September 2022

- [Rashed Baluch and Eshaq Askani](#), alleged members of Jaish al-Adl (“Army of Justice”), a Sunni extremist organization, were executed on November 8, 2022, in Zahedan Central Prison, Sistan and Baluchestan province, charged without evidence with the killing of four police officers in 2016. Their families have [insisted](#) that neither were members of the organization and in fact had not engaged in political activities at all. Jaish al-Adl itself issued a statement [denying](#) any links with the two.
- [Mohsen Shekari](#), 23, a protester who worked at a coffee shop, was hanged on December 8, 2022, in Rajaee Shahr Prison in Karaj, west of Tehran, in connection with nationwide protests. He was convicted of “enmity against God,” after he was tried without a lawyer of his choice, with [accusations](#) of “blocking a street in Tehran, creating fear and depriving people of freedom and security, and intentionally wounding a security agent with a cold weapon (knife).” State media broadcast a video of Shekari making self-incriminating statements with a bruise visible on his face.
- [Majid Reza Rahnavard](#), 23, was hanged in public in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province, without due process, on December 12, 2022, less than a week after being sentenced to death. Rahnavard was arrested in Mashhad on November 17, 2022, and

accused of killing a member of the Basij paramilitary force. Two days later, state media broadcast a video of him—blindfolded and with his arm in a sling—saying he did not deny attacking a member of the Basij paramilitary force but did not remember the details. Rahnavard was convicted on the charge of “enmity against God.” He was denied a lawyer of his choice and time to prepare a proper defense. The self-incriminating statement he was forced to make on state TV while blindfolded was used in court as a “confession.”

- [Mohammad Mehdi Karami](#), 22, and [Seyed Mohammad Hosseini](#), 39, were executed on January 7, 2023, two months after being arrested for the killing of a member of the Basij paramilitary force in Karaj, Alborz province, in November 2022. Before he was executed, Karami, a semi-professional karate champion from a working-class family, had been on a hunger strike for four days to demand access to his lawyer. “They told us we can appeal the sentence,” said Karami’s father in an [interview](#) with the Etemad news site shortly before the execution. “For a week, I’ve been calling the lawyer who has been appointed by the judiciary, but he hasn’t answered. This lawyer hasn’t even given me his office address...” The journalist who interviewed Karami’s father, Mehdi Beyk, was later arrested for doing his job. Karami’s chosen lawyer, who was blocked from representing his client in court, had [tweeted](#) that he was going to seek an appeal of the sentence if the judiciary had accepted his representation. The lawyer added that the family was not allowed to see Karami to say goodbye before he was hanged. “I met Mohammad Hosseini in Karaj prison. He was in tears, talking about how he was tortured and beaten while blindfolded,” [said](#) Hosseini’s lawyer last month. “Statements made by a person under torture have no legal merit.”
- British-Iranian dual national [Alireza Akbari](#), 62, was executed on January 14, 2023. The ex-deputy Iranian defense minister was arrested in 2019 and convicted of spying for the UK, which he denied. The execution was carried out after Iran posted a video showing what appeared to be Akbari’s forced confessions, and after the country’s intelligence ministry had described the British-Iranian as “one of the most important agents of the British intelligence service in Iran.” (BBC)
- [Hassan Abyat](#), 45, was executed on February 20, 2023, in Sepidar prison in Khuzestan province. He was sentenced to death twice — once by a Revolutionary Court for “enmity against God” and once by a Criminal Court for murder — in relation to the death of an agent from the Basij militia in 2011 and alleged membership of an

“opposition group.” Amnesty International [reported](#) Abyat had denied any involvement in the agent’s death. “After subjecting him to enforced disappearance, interrogators tied Abyat to a special bed made for torture, beat him with cables and administered electric shocks to his testicles, according to a witness who also told Amnesty International that scars remained on Hassan Abyat’s body from the torture. The court convicted him without investigating his torture allegations, according to Amnesty. Denied access to legal representation, he was executed in secret, with no final visit or notice given to their families.

- [Sarkout Ahmadi](#), a Kurdish political activist, was executed in Dizel Abad prison in Kermanshah, western Iran, on February 22, 2023, charged with “waging war” through membership of Komeleh, a Kurdish opposition group, and murder of a member of the security forces. Revolutionary Guards interrogators [forced him](#) to make “confessions” under torture and other ill-treatment. He was denied access to legal representation and executed in secret, with no final visit or notice given to their families.
- [Mohiyeddin Ebrahimi](#), 43, a Kurdish political activist from Oshnavieh, West Azerbaijan province, was executed on March 17, 2023. He was wounded on November 3, 2017 by a gunshot fired by IRGC intelligence agents in a village near Oshnavieh. He was accused of membership in the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran and severely tortured. In August 2018, Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court in Oroumiyeh sentenced him to death on charges of “armed insurrection.” A source close to the political prisoner told the [Kurdish Human Rights Network](#): “Ebrahimi and two horses carrying four cartons of alcoholic beverages in the border region of Oshnavieh with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq were targeted by border forces, during which Ebrahimi was wounded. At the same time, an armed group carrying weapons in the area escaped after seeing the border forces and their horses were seized by these forces.” According to the source, the IRGC considered the weapon load discovered farther away to belong to Ebrahimi, without providing evidence. Ebrahimi was denied the right to even to a court-appointed lawyer throughout his trial.
- [Habib Farajollah Chaab](#), a 49-year-old Iranian-born Swedish citizen, was executed on May 6, 2023, accused of being behind a deadly 2018 attack on a military parade. Chaab was a founder of a separatist group calling for independence for ethnic Arabs in Iran’s south-western Khuzestan province. He had been living in exile in Sweden for a decade when he was lured to Turkey by IRI agents and forcibly taken to Iran in 2020.

The Iranian government refused to allow the Swedish government to visit Chaab or be present at his trial, where Chaab was denied a lawyer of his choice and a fair trial.

- [Yousef Mehrdad](#) and [Sadrollah Fazeli Zare](#), were executed on May 8, 2023, in Arak Prison in central Iran after being convicted for blasphemy (“insulting” Prophet Mohammad”). They were arrested in 2020, accused of being involved in a Telegram channel called “Critique of Superstition and Religion.” The judiciary’s news agency Mizan [reported](#), “Based on the verdict, Sadrollah Fazeli-Zare, on charges of insulting the Prophet, apostasy, slander of the mother of the Prophet, desecrating the Quran by burning, insulting religious sanctities, and publishing private images of others without their consent, and Yousef Mehrdad, on charges of insulting the Prophet and disrespecting religious and Islamic sanctities, were sentenced to death.”
- [Saleh Mirhashemi](#), 36, [Majid Kazemi](#), 30, [Saeed Yaghoubi](#), 37, were executed on May 19, 2023, in Dastgerd Prison in Isfahan, central Iran. They were arrested amid the nationwide protests in November 2022, tortured into making “confessions,” and sentenced to death in January 2023 after a four-day trial without a jury in the IRI’s Revolutionary Court system. The three men were charged with killing a police officer and two Basij militiamen, but the prosecution’s only “evidence” was taped, forced “confessions” obtained under torture in which the men made self-incriminating statements as well as against each other. None of the defendants were allowed to choose their own lawyer. Instead, as in all so-called “national security” cases in the IRI, they were forced to use state-approved, court-appointed lawyers.
- [Hemin Mostafaie](#), 34, was executed on June 21, 2023, in the Central Prison of Sanandaj, Kurdistan province. Mostafaie was arrested on March 1, 2013, in Marivan, Kurdistan province, on charges of “murdering” Ebrahim Mohammadi, a former member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Under interrogation and physical and psychological torture, he took responsibility for the murder and his “confession” was broadcast on Iran’s state-owned Press TV. He was subjected to physical and psychological torture in the Ministry of Intelligence detention center and denied family visits. He was returned to Sanandaj Central Prison after a 10-day hunger strike following five months in the Ministry of Intelligence detention center.
- [Mohammad Ramez Rashidi and Naim Hashem Ghetali](#), Afghan nationals, were publicly hanged* on July 8, 2023, in Shiraz, Fars province. They were sentenced to death on

charges of “corruption on earth” and “armed insurrection” in relation to the terrorist attack on the Shah Cheragh shrine on October 26, 2022, without due process or fair trials. The forced confessions of Mohammad Ramez Rashidi were aired prior to any legal proceedings. Clips from security cameras released at the time of the attack showed a lone gunman entering the shrine with an automatic rifle. After opening fire and making his way to the main compound, he shot a group of pilgrims and staff. Authorities said 13 people were killed, with 40 people injured. (The IRI’s has continued to carry out public executions, in violation of [international standards](#) on this issue.)

- [Qasem \(Ghasem\) Abasteh](#), 44, and was executed on November 5, 2023, in Ghezel Hesar (Qezel Hesar) Prison in Karaj. He was arrested on December 7, 2009, along with six fellow ethnic Kurdish Iranians and sentenced to death in March 2015 by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on charges of “waging war,” “corruption on earth,” and “supporting Salafi (Sunni extremist) groups.” One of Abasteh’s relatives told the [Iran Human Rights](#) organization: “The seven prisoners were physically and mentally tortured to extract forced confessions. Despite years passing, the signs of torture were still visible on Ghasem’s body.” A co-defendant in the case, [Ayoub Karimi](#), age unknown, was executed on November 30, 2023. A father of two children from Mahabad, Karimi went through the same judicial process as in the case of Qasem Abesteh and five other co-defendants.
- [Milad Zohrehvand](#), 21, a protester, was executed on November 23, 2023. He was arrested during the 2022 uprising in the city of Malayer, Hamedan province. A road construction worker, he was sentenced to death on the charge of killing a member of the IRGC during a memorial for Jina Mahsa Amini on October 26, 2022. He faced pressure to “confess” to being a “rioter.” Zohrevand's death sentence was confirmed in the Supreme Court while he was denied access to a lawyer during his detention, and during this time his family was under severe pressure from the IRGC Intelligence Organization not to disseminate information about him, the Dadban human rights news [reported](#).
- [\(Geda\) Ali Saber Motlagh](#), 62, was executed in Rasht Central Prison, Gilan province, on November 25, 2023. A political prisoner linked with the Mojahedin Khalgh organization in the 1980s, he had been acquitted of assassinating a government official. Motlagh was living abroad for many years but upon returning to Iran approximately four years ago, he was re-arrested on the same alleged charge of assassination, [subjected to](#)

[prolonged torture](#) and interrogation, and subsequently sentenced to death, despite the lack of evidence presented in court. It is unclear whether he was executed on charges of murder or “waging war.” Ali Saber Motlagh consistently denied any involvement in the murder.

- [Hani Albushahbazi](#), 32, was executed in Sepidar Prison in Ahvaz on November 30, 2023. Arrested in December 2019, days after the start of protests in Shadegan, Khuzestan province, Albushahbazi was accused of murdering a “police officer and a morality defender.” He was sentenced to death on charges of “waging war by drawing a weapon with the intention to kill people” by the Revolutionary Court in Abadan, Khuzestan province. He was [subjected to severe torture](#), in order to extract “confessions.”
- [Kamran Rezaei](#), 33, was executed in the Adelabad Prison in Shiraz on November 30, 2023. He was arrested during nationwide protests in November 2019 and charged with murdering a Basij militia member. An informed source told Iran Human Rights: “Rezaei was held in solitary confinement for seven months and forced to make self-incriminating confessions under torture. He was tortured so much that Kamran said he had blood in his urine for a lengthy time afterwards and had also sustained damage to his right ear. He always said he was innocent and would be released.”
- Mohammad Reza Habibiyan, a bank security guard who killed a senior cleric in April 2023, was executed on December 13, 2023 in Babol Central Prison in Mazandaran province. Following the killing of Ayatollah Abbas Ali Soleimani, a former representative of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in Sistan and Baluchestan province, as well as a former member of the powerful Assembly of Experts, reports emerged that the bank guard was angry that the cleric was receiving a large loan from the bank but his request for \$1,200 had been rejected. ([Persian Independent](#) / [Radio Farda](#))
- An alleged agent of Israel's Mossad intelligence service was executed on December 16, 2023 in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan province, Iran’s official IRNA news agency reported. "This person communicated with foreign services, specifically Mossad, collecting classified information, and with participation with associates, provided documents to foreign services, including the Mossad," it said. It did not name the person. ([IRNA](#))

Politically motivated death sentences issued in Iran since September 2022

- In December 2022 protesters **Javad Roohi (Rouhi)** (31), **Mehdi Mohammadifard** (19) and **Arshia Takdastan** (18) were sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Court in Sari, Mazandaran province, in connection with protests in Noshahr, Mazandaran province, on September 21, 2022. They were charged with “waging war” and “corruption on earth,” for which they received two death sentences. Roohi was also sentenced to death for “apostasy” based on his torture-tainted “confessions” that he burned a copy of the Quran. In its verdicts, the court stated that the young men “incited... widespread” arson or vandalism by dancing, clapping, chanting or burning headscarves. For Roohi and Takdastan, the prosecution provided no evidence of their involvement in such acts while the court solely relied on their torture-tainted “confessions” of, respectively, forcibly entering and throwing items from inside a traffic police booth, and throwing stones and a glass bottle toward a police car and blocking a road. Roohi [died in prison](#) in August 2023, see below. ([Amnesty International](#))
- Arrested during “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchestan province, in October 2022, **Kambiz Khorvat**, 21, **Mansour Dehmardeh**, 23, and **Ebrahim Narouie**, 26, have been sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Court in Zahedan on charges of “waging war” and “corruption on earth” for allegedly setting fire to a bank. “I only threw three rocks and set fire to a tire,” said Dehmardeh, a physically disabled bus attendant, in his trial. Denied legal counsel, the three prisoners were severely beaten and tortured, including with electric shocks, in order to extract false confessions during detention. Two other Baluchi men – **Mansour Hout** and **Nezamoddin Hout** – are facing retrials on capital charges also in connection with protests. ([Daadban](#) / [Amnesty International](#))
- **Mojahed Korkor** (Kourkour), 34, has been sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Court in Ahvaz, Khuzestan province, on the false charge of killing Kian Pirmalak, a 9-year-old boy who was shot while inside his parents car during a protest in Izeh, Khuzestan province, on November 16, 2022. Pirmalak’s parents notarized a [statement](#) in June 2023 declaring that their son was killed by state security forces. “We declare that we witnessed the killing of our child and the injuring of Meysam Pirmalak (the father) by the shooting of judiciary agents on our private vehicle and we have filed a

complaint against them...” said the statement. In a post on Instagram on November 7, 2023, Korkor’s sister [said](#) her brother was taken from a hospital back to Sheiban Prison in Ahvaz. “After three days in the hospital, before his injuries had healed, he was taken on a stretcher to solitary confinement. My parents got a glimpse of him from a distance. He didn’t look good at all. We haven’t heard from him for three days. He hasn’t been allowed to make phone calls for a long time.” ([CHRI](#) / [HRANA](#))

- **Ali Rezaei**, 19, was arrested on September 21, 2022, during a protest in Tehran’s Piroozi Street and sentenced to death six months later by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in connection with assaulting a member of the Basij militia. “Judge Amoozadeh informed Ali that he had been charged with waging war. Ali’s face was wet with tears. I was not given permission to speak as his lawyer. During the trial he insisted that he played no part in assaulting the Basiji,” said his lawyer, Reza Shafakhah. ([Shargh newspaper](#))
- Arrested on November 29, 2022, after being summoned to the IRGC Intelligence Organization in Kamyaran, Kurdistan province, **Pouria Javaheri**, has been sentenced to death by Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj, the provincial capital, on the charges of “waging war by deliberate murder of a police officer, assault and injury of several other police officers, membership in opposition groups, and propaganda against the state.” He was tortured during his two months in the IRGC’s detention center in Kamyaran before being transferred to the city’s Central Prison. In a phone call to his family, Javaheri said he suffered a broken rib during interrogation. “My innocent son has been given an unjust sentence ... I want international human rights organizations and [Iran’s] judiciary to defend his rights,” his father said in an interview. ([HRANA](#) / [Daadban](#))
- Arrested during the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement in Kurdish regions in western Iran, **Tohid Darvish, Keyvan Zandi, Aram Azad, Sardar Shahmoradi, Houshang Chahar-Gorgeh, Hejar Hamidi, Himan Shahi, Faryad Hamzehshoor, Reza Eslamdoost, Shahram Marouf-Mola** and **Ayoub Aghliani** remain in danger of receiving the death penalty on the charge of “waging war,” reported Kurdistan Human Rights Network on August 28, 2023. Keyvan Zandi, Aram Azad, Sardar Shah-Moradi, and Houshang Chahar-Gorgeh were arrested separately by security forces during the protests in late November 2022 and subsequently subjected to severe physical and psychological torture during their months-long detention at a security detention center in Sanandaj.

They were reportedly accused of “involvement in the murder of a police officer” on November 17, 2022. ([Kurdish Human Rights Association](#))

- Author **Mehdi Bahman** was sentenced to death in late December 2022, by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on “espionage” charges after he gave an interview to Israel’s Channel 13 television in October 2022. In an audio message from prison on December 7, 2023, he said two prisoners tried to kill him. ([Radio Zamaneh](#))
- Originally sentenced to death in connection with “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests, **Javad Roohi**, 35, died on August 31, 2023, after being transferred from the Central Prison of the city of Nowshahr in Mazandaran province, to a hospital. He had been given a death sentence on charges of “corruption on earth,” “destruction of property and setting fire to a traffic kiosk,” and “blasphemy and insulting the sacred by setting fire to a Quran,” later overturned by the Supreme Court in May 2023. A [video](#) posted on social media showed Roohi only dancing in the street amid the protests. After his arrest on September 22, 2022, he was subjected to torture during interrogations. ([CHRI](#))

Charges issued in politically motivated cases that can potentially carry the death penalty

- **Milad Armoon, Alireza Kafaei, Amir Mohammad Khosheqbal, Alireza Barmarz Pournak, Mohammad Mehdi Hosseini, Hossein Nemati, Mehdi Imani and Navid Najjaran** have been charged with “participating in murder, conspiring against national security and waging war” in connection with the killing of Arman Aliverdi, a cleric who was a member of the Basij paramilitary, in the Ekbatan neighborhood of Tehran during a protest on October 28, 2022. Their trial was held in early October 2023 in Branch 13 of the First Criminal Court in Tehran but no sentence has yet been issued. On November 3, 2022, Iran’s state broadcaster, the Islamic Republic Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), aired an interview with Armoon, who—while blindfolded—repeatedly [insisted](#) he was only a bystander and did not kill anyone. Prior to the broadcast, officials had tried to gather video footage from nearby security cameras, CHRI has learned. A resident of Ekbatan told CHRI, “It looks like they have no proof or evidence to charge them. The authorities were angry at me and other shopkeepers for not filming the incident.” ([CHRI](#) / [HRANA](#))

- **Saeed Shirazi** was put on trial in connection with “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests on October 29, 2022, in Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, charged with “corruption on earth, inciting and encouraging people to commit crimes against the national security and serious disruption of order.” The judge accused him of posting instructions on Instagram for protesters on how to make hand grenades. There are conflicting reports on whether he has been sentenced. ([Committee Following the Status of Detainees](#) / [Mizan](#) news agency)
- **Abolfazl Mehri Hosseini Hajilou** is a semi-professional soccer player in Tehran, who was 17 years old at the time of his arrest in September 2022, in connection with “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests. He was sentenced to death after a trial held on October 29, 2022, in Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court, for “fighting the Islamic Republic through arson and destruction of public property with the intent to disrupt national order and security.” ([Mizan](#) news agency / [Iran Prison Atlas](#))
- In November 2022, **Manouchehr Mehman-Navaz** was sentenced to death for allegedly destroying property and blocking traffic during the “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests in September 2022. His charge was “waging war by deliberate burning of buildings with the intention of confronting the Islamic Republic, assembly and collusion against national security, disruption of public order and security by causing chaos and commotion, and participating in illegal gatherings.” In November 2022, a Revolutionary Court in Tehran ruled that this amounted to “waging war” in an “unfair sham trial bearing no resemblance to meaningful judicial proceedings,” according to Amnesty International. The death sentence was issued in a speedy manner just two weeks after his trial started on October, 29, 2022. ([Fararu](#) / [Amnesty International](#))
- **Reza Arabpour** could face the death penalty in connection with the “Woman, Life Freedom” protests in Izeh, Khuzestan province. Arrested with seven others by the IRGC intelligence agents in November 2022 and [charged](#) with “corruption on earth and waging war through membership of an opposition group,” Arabpour is the only one who could receive capital punishment as his co-defendants have been [granted bail](#) and are expected to face imprisonment, according to their lawyer Hosseinali Hatami. Their case will go on trial in Branch 4 of the Revolutionary Court in Ahvaz, the provincial capital of Khuzestan, but no date has yet been set. ([Daadban](#) / [Radio Farda](#))

- On December 9, 2023, political activists **Forough Taghipour, Marzieh Farsi** and **Nasim Gholamifard** were charged by the security court in Evin Prison with “rebellion” for alleged cooperation with an anti-state organization, which can result in the death penalty. Taghipour and Farsi have been in detention in Ward Evin Prison in Tehran since August 21, 2023. Both have spent time behind bars for their peaceful activism in recent years. In detention in Evin since July 2023, there is no further information on Gholamifard. ([Bidarzani](#) women’s news)
- **Makan (Ali) Davari**, 19, was arrested in Langrud, northern Iran, in connection with the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement on October 18, 2022. In an online hearing held on December 20, 2022, he was charged with “waging war” for “disturbing order, assembly and collusion against national security, waging war and corruption on earth, propaganda against the state, inciting people to war with the intention of disrupting national security and insulting the Supreme Leader.” As of August 2023, he was free on bail and there have been no updates. ([IranWire](#))
- In December 2022 **Meysam Mobarhan**, an advocate for Turkish ethnic rights, was charged with “waging war” for allegedly burning the flag of the Islamic Republic during “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests at the end of November 2022 in the city of Malekan, in East Azerbaijan province. Interrogators forced him to “confess” and released the video. There has been no update on his case. ([Sarkhat](#) human rights news)
- Arrested in November 2022, **Akbar Ghaffari** was charged with “waging war” for giving refuge to protesters fleeing Islamic Republic forces on Fallah Street in Tehran during the “Woman, Life, Freedom” uprising. There has been no update on his case since December 2022. ([IranWire](#))
- **Omid Bahrami-Gour Masouleh** and **Rahmat Norouzi**, arrested during the nationwide protests in Rasht, Gilan province, were charged with “waging war” for allegedly setting fire to a Basij militia base,” it was reported on January 2, 2023. The only “evidence” has been their forced confessions. “In the few prison visits Omid had with his family, he said he was beaten and forced to sign dozens of pages of false statements,” a source told HRANA. ([HRANA](#))
- Charged with “waging war,” animal rights activist **Ramin (Amir) Pouramin** case was referred to Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in January 2023, but there

has been no updates on the judicial process since. He was arrested on November 7, 2022, during “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests. ([Free Workers Union of Iran / Iran Human Rights](#))

- **Ali Jahangiri**, a 24-year-old chef, was arrested at his home in Tehran by Ministry of Intelligence agents on December 9, 2022, and charged with “waging war.” “He was held in Evin Prison’s Ward 209 [under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence] for a month and during this time he only called his family twice. The second time he called he was not well and cried a lot,” a source told IranWire on January 7, 2023. ([IranWire](#))
- On December 17, 2022, it was reported that **Mahsa Mohammadi**, a student at Sabzevar University, was charged with “insulting the Prophet [Mohammad]” because of the content of one of her tweets. There has been no update on this case. ([Progressive Students](#))
- On January 10, 2023, **Majid Shabдини Yashaki**, 38, was put on trial in the Revolutionary Court in Lahijan, Gilan province, on the charge of “waging war” for “participating in the murder of Hamid Pournorouz,” a security agent who was confronting protesters in Lahijan on November 3, 2022. He has denied the charge. In addition to his severe injuries during arrest, he was brutally tortured during interrogation. There has been no update on the judicial process. ([Daadbaan](#) human rights news)
- Detained in Dastgerd Prison in Isfahan, central Iran, since February 1, 2023, **Mahmoud Mehrabi** has been charged with 187 counts in connection with the “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests, including “corruption on earth through spreading falsehoods on Instagram, propaganda against the state, discouraging military and police forces from carrying out their duties, inciting people to war and bloodshed, as well as insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic.” No evidence has been presented to back up the charges in the complaint against him by 77 individuals, all with links to the state. ([Daadban](#))
- Arrested in February 2023 in connection with protests in Jiroft, Kerman province, eight civil rights activists have been charged with “corruption on earth and waging war through acting against national security and collaboration with foreign enemy states,” which could result in the death penalty: **Hadi Hayati, Abdolreza Rajaeinejad, Pوران Nazemi Moezabadi, Teymour Salari, Mohsen Ravari, Mohsen Ahmadizadeh, Kambiz**

Cheshanpour and **Shayesteh Jalali**. Other charges include “armed attacks against the Islamic Republic” and “insulting Islamic sanctities.” No details are available on the exact reason for the arrests. “Some of the defendants in this case, who were arrested by the IRGC intelligence agents in Kerman province during the nationwide ‘Women, Life, and Freedom’ protests, were interrogated and tortured for several months,” according to Daadban human rights news service. Their trial is pending in Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Jiroft, with no date announced as of yet. ([Daadban](#))

- On February 11, 2023, brothers **Farhad** and **Farzad Tahazadeh** were indicted on the charge of “waging war” and “corruption on earth” in connection with protests in Oshnavieh, West Azerbaijan province, during the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement. There has been no update on their prosecution since. ([HRANA](#))
- Arrested by IRGC intelligence agents at his home in the city of Sangar, Gilan province, on July 19, 2023, former political prisoner and labor activist **Younes Azadbar** has been charged with “waging war, propaganda against the state and membership in anti-state groups,” while being denied legal counsel. The retired telecommunications worker incarcerated in Lakan Prison in the northern city of Rasht, was hospitalized in October 2023 following an epileptic episode, saying that both his legs and one hand were tied to his bed with “handcuffs and chains.” “I’m Younes Azadbar, a political prisoner in Rasht's Lakan prison who previously spent 11 years in the prisons of the Islamic Republic during the 1980s and subsequent years,” he said in an audio message received by IranWire on October 3, 2023. “I am imprisoned in Rasht's Lakan prison despite struggling with epilepsy,” he continued, adding, “I suffered an epileptic attack on the morning of Saturday, October 1, and if my cellmates hadn’t acted promptly the outcome could have been different.” ([Daadban](#) / [IranWire](#))
- On March 16, 2023, **Sajjad Imannejad**, 34, was put on trial in Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on charges of “waging war” and “corruption on earth” for defending himself against Islamic Republic agents during his arrest on October 8, 2022. No verdict has yet been issued. “He shouted a few slogans and ran away, but in one of the streets, seven officers caught him and beat him close to death,” according to a source quoted by Sarkhat. He was severely tortured in Evin Prison to the point that cellmates “could not look in his face.” ([Sarkhat](#) human rights news)

- On June 22, 2023, indictments were issued against Mohammad Reza **Narouei Shirani** (49), **Esmail Shahbakhsh** (41), **Rouhollah Kahrazehi** (21) - three ethnic Baluchi men tortured into incriminating themselves in the murder of a Sajjad Shahraki, a pro-regime cleric in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchestan province, in November 2022. “They have been subjected to severe torture in the Ministry of Intelligence detention center and forced into making confessions. They have been subjected to severe torture...” a source told Haalvsh Baluchi news service. ([Haalvsh](#))
- **Arash Ghanbari**, 31, has been charged with “insulting Islamic sanctities, Prophet (Mohammad), the founder of the Islamic Republic Rouhollah Khomeini and the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, as well as propaganda against the state and inciting people to cause chaos with the intention of disrupting the national security.” He has been in solitary confinement in Isfahan’s Dastgerd prison since his arrest on August 2, 2023, when he was summoned to the IRGC Intelligence Organization in Shahreza, Isfahan province, for the return of his phone, documents and other items confiscated during a raid on his home on December 28, 2022. He has been denied the right to a lawyer, phone calls and family visits. An informed source told Daadbaan human rights news: “Ghanbari is taken out of solitary confinement once a week for interrogation, during which he is severely beaten and tortured, resulting in a broken arm. The prison authorities do not pay attention to his poor condition.” ([Daadbaan](#) human rights news / [HRANA](#))
- **Fahimeh Karimi**, a volleyball instructor, has been charged with “waging war” for her participation in the “Woman, Life, Freedom” uprising. No details are available about her arrest and trial. An Italian blogger who was her cellmate said Karimi would bang on cell bars and shout “Freedom! Freedom!” according to the BBC. On September 13, 2023, the judiciary office in Pakdasht, Tehran province, denied she had been sentenced: “The mentioned case is being investigated and the legal process is ongoing, and so far, no verdict has been issued by the judicial authorities against the accused, Fahimeh Karimi, and reports published in cyberspace are lies.” ([BBC](#) / [Hafta Sobh](#) news in Iran)

Death sentences that have been suspended or overturned

- In a trial in Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on October 29, 2022, in connection with nationwide protests, Kurdish dissident rapper **Saman Yasin (Seydi)**

was sentenced to death on the charge of “waging war” and “assembly and collusion with the intention of acting against the security of the country.” On the same day, a video of the singer’s forced “confessions” was released by state media. In late December 2022, the Supreme Court overturned the sentence and ordered a retrial. On July 22, 2023, Yasin was transferred against his will to Aminabad Hospital, also referred to as the Razei Psychiatric Hospital, in Shar-e-Rey, Tehran province, on the orders of Judge Abolqasem Salavati. Prior to his transfer, he had suffered a left nasal injury as a result of torture during interrogation, but had not received medical treatment. After refusing and resisting injections by hospital staff, he was reportedly beaten by security forces and hospital personnel while shackled to bed. The forced admission of the political prisoner to Aminabad Hospital came after the release of a voice message from him on social media about his recent situation. In an [audio message](#) from Rajaee Shahr Prison in Karaj, Alborz province, Yasin said he had been in a state of uncertainty for 10 months and denied access to legal representation by order of Judge Salavati. He was returned to prison from the psychiatric hospital four days later. In December 2023 his lawyer, Reza Shafakhah [tweeted](#): “My client Saman Seydi (Yasin) is still being held more than a year since his detention order was issued, in violation of the law. This is while he is medically unfit to endure continued incarceration. The matter has been referred to the Medical Commission and we are waiting for the result.” ([CHRI](#) / Kurdistan Human Rights Network: [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#) / [HRANA](#))

- **Abbas Deris**, a protester whose death sentence was overturned by Iran’s Supreme Court, has been resented to 14 years in prison, [his lawyer Fereshteh Tabanian said](#) on December 14, 2023, adding that he would appeal the decision as there was no evidence against his client. Deris, father of three young boys, was charged with “waging war” in connection with the death of Reza Sayyadi, one of the commanders of the police special forces suppressing protests in Mahshahr, Khuzestan province, in November 2019. The death sentence against his brother, **Mohsen Deris**, a co-defendant in the case, was overturned in October 2023, and resented to two years for gun possession. The information used by the prosecution against the two brothers had only been conveyed verbally by judicial authorities to the defense—giving the defendants no ability to properly prepare an adequate defense—and that lawyers’ requests for written documents were all denied. As is common in court proceedings dealing with trumped-up “national security” charges in Iran, the Deris brothers were isolated from their family and lawyers, subjected to torture, and coerced into making

false confessions. After learning about Abbas Deris' death sentence, his wife suffered a stroke and died. ([Sarkhat](#) / [CHRI](#) / [HRANA](#) / [Daadban](#) / [BBC](#))

- The Supreme Court overturned the death sentence against **Mohammad Ghobadlou** in July 2023. Ghobadlou, 22, was charged with “waging war” and “corruption on earth” in connection with the killing of a police officer and injuring five others. His lawyer, Amir Raesian, said, “Branch 1 of the Supreme Court overturned the verdict and from now on my client's mental health issues will be taken into consideration [in a retrial].” Ghobadlou received two death sentences after grossly unjust trials marred by “confessions” extracted under torture and failure to order rigorous mental health assessments despite his mental disability. Ghobadlou’s mother posted a [video](#) on October 31, 2022, saying her son had been sentenced to death without the presence of his lawyer during trial. “Is this Islamic justice?” she asked. ([CHRI](#) / [Amnesty International](#))
- Lawyers representing **Reza Rasaei**, a political prisoner sentenced to death in connection with the “Woman, Life, Freedom” movement, successfully raised objections leading to the Supreme Court agreeing to review the case, it was reported on December 4, 2023. Rasaei, arrested on November 24, 2022, was sentenced for “complicity in the murder” of Nader Beyrami, the head of the IRGC Intelligence Organization in Sahneh, Kermanshah province, as well as “participating in the intentional infliction of non-fatal injuries”, “demonstrating strength with a knife” and “disrupting public order by creating chaos and commotion.” (Kurdistan Human Rights Network [1](#) - [2](#))

Juvenile executions

- 2023 (Two that are known):

Hamidreza Azari, 17, was executed in the Central Prison of Sabzevar, Khorasan Razavi province, on November 24, 2023, for an alleged murder committed when he was 16. Born on August 1, 2006, Azari allegedly murdered a man named Hamidreza Aldaghi on April 28, 2023, in a street altercation over a woman. Co-defendant Abolfazl Sarpooshi was handed a 15-year prison sentence. Tasnim news agency, close to Iran’s security establishment, [reported](#) the execution without mentioning Azari’s name or age. It referred to Aldaghi as a “martyr” and published a photo showing his coffin draped

with the official flag of the Islamic Republic during a funeral procession. According to Tasnim, “Martyr Hamidreza Aldghi was [knifed] by some youths in one of the streets of Sabzevar at 21:00 on the 28th of April [2023] while defending fellow citizens, and attained the grace of martyrdom. Investigations found that the two defendants in the case have numerous criminal records. In response to Martyr Aldaghi’s defense of a young girl, they brutally stabbed him in the back with a [knife] and ... severely beat him from the front, and after committing the crime, ran away from the scene.” Judiciary Chief Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei, who ordered a speedy trial, paid Aldaghi a glowing tribute, further suggesting he had ties to the state: “This young man was a fervent patriot who embodied the culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran. When he saw another person being oppressed and assaulted, he stepped in, even at the cost of his life.” ([Tasnim](#) / [Hengaw](#) / [Iran Human Rights](#))

Adel Damani, 25, was executed in the Central Prison of Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchestan province, on November 27, 2023, for a murder he never admitted to. He was arrested in 2014 for allegedly committing murder with a knife during a group fight in Chabahar’s Free Trade Zone. One of his former cellmates told Haalvsh, a Baluchi human rights service: “Adel repeatedly denied the murder accusation and said he did not have any weapon in his hand during the fight and that the murder was not committed by him and that he is not a murderer and only got angry for a moment because of his young age.” The execution was not announced by Iranian authorities or reported in state media. ([Haalvsh](#) / [Iran Human Rights](#))

- 2022 (Six that are known):

Executed in the Central Prison of Yazd, Yazd province on May 15, 2022, **Mehrab Salehi**, 20, was “most probably” a juvenile offender” at the time of the alleged murder he was convicted of, according to Iran Human Rights. Relatives told Iran Human Rights that Mehrab was born in the month of Esfand, 1381, on the Iranian calendar (February 19-March 20, 2003) and arrested in the month of Dey, 1398 (December 22, 2019 - January 20, 2020), making him 16 years old at the time of the alleged offense. “Mehrab Salehi was previously taken to the gallows twice and had been able to obtain extensions each time. The victim’s family had demanded approximately \$50,000 as blood money, a sum Mehrab’s family were unable to afford,” according to Iran Human Rights. The execution was not announced by Iranian authorities or reported in state media. ([Iran Human Rights](#) / [HRANA](#))

Farshad Gomshadzehi, 19, was executed in Zahedan’s Central Prison on May 14, 2022, for an alleged murder when he was possibly 17. “It is said that Farshad Gomshadzehi was arrested on the charge of murder in 2020 when he was 17 years old, and then sentenced to death,” reported the Baloch Activists Campaign. The Iran Human Rights organization also reported that Gomshadzehi “may have been under the age of 18” which the alleged crime took place. The execution was not announced by Iranian authorities or reported in state media. ([Baloch Activists Campaign](#) / [Iran Human Rights](#))

Ghadir Nasser, 23, was executed in Sepidar Prison in Ahvaz, Khuzestan province, on June 7, 2022, for allegedly killing two security agents during a raid on his father’s home in Mahshahr on June 19, 2016, when he was 17. The [video](#) of a memorial rally for Nasser was shared on social media. No further details are available. The execution was not announced by Iranian authorities or reported in state media. ([Iran Human Rights Monitor](#) / [Al-Ahawz News](#) / [Radio Zamaneh](#))

Mohammad Hossein Alizadeh, an Afghan national, was executed in the Central Prison of Qom, Qom province, on August 10, 2022, at the age of 24. However, he was 16 at the time of the alleged offense. He was born on October 6, 2000, and the alleged murder happened during a street fight in Qom’s Motahari Square on June 30, 2017. In court, Alizadeh said: “I don’t accept the murder. The knife belongs to me but I don’t remember if I used it on anyone or not. I wasn’t in a normal state, I had been drinking.” In a letter to Qom’s judiciary chief, he wrote: “All my confessions were extracted through torture, force, beatings and insults at the police station.” [The judgment](#) issued by the Supreme Court states: “After issuing the order to resolve the flaws and complete the investigations, Branch 1 of the First Criminal Court sought the opinion of the Forensic Medical Commission on the defendant’s mental development and maturity. In light of the defendant’s complaint, a five-member board of neuropsychiatry and forensic medicine experts ruled that the named individual suffers from behavioral disorder, aggression and irritability but that he has the ability to differentiate between good and bad, benefit and harm, and is mentally developed and mature according to his age, and there was no evidence that he did not recognise the difference between right and wrong at the time of committing the crime.” About a month after Alizadeh’s execution, a [video](#) was shared on social media showing the moment he was visited by family after his arrest. ([Haalvsh](#) Baluchi human rights news / [Iran Human Rights](#))

Omid Alizehi was one of five Iranian ethnic Baluchi men executed in the Central Prison of Zahedan on August 20, 2022. Alizehi was 22 years old, but at the time of the alleged murder during a street fight, he was 17. Born on July 22, 2000, Alizehi was arrested in the month of Dey, 1396, on the Iranian calendar (December 22, 2017 - January 20, 2018), for an alleged murder committed during a street fight. An informed source close to Alizehi's family told Iran Human Rights organization: "Omid was held in [Zahedan Central Prison's] Correctional Ward for two years after his arrest before being transferred to Juvenile Ward 1. He was acquitted of murder at first, with the court ruling the death to be unintentional. But Omid's family were very poor and couldn't afford to hire a lawyer. The victim's family had plenty of money and spent it to change the sentence to murder." ([Haalvsh](#) / [Iran Human Rights](#))

Yousef Mirzavand, 22, was executed on December 26, 2022, in the Central Prison of Dezful, Khuzestan province, for a murder he allegedly committed at age 16. The family's [invitations](#) for the memorial service was published by Amsterdam-based Radio Zamaneh. According to court documents received by Iran Human Rights organization, the charges against Mirzavand were "initiating an armed robbery, carrying hunting weapons without a license, committing intentional assault with a weapon, murder, accessory to murder and conspiracy to escape trial." An informed source told Iran Human Rights: "Yousef was accused of killing someone with a weapon when he was 16 but his family said he was innocent. Someone else had committed the murder and Yousef had taken the wrap for it... Yousef was from the Mirzavand tribe in Lorestan. The elders had been trying to convince the victim's family to forgo executions for five days but were unsuccessful." ([Iran Human Rights organization](#) / [Radio Zamaneh](#))

The execution of women (*case details included in the links in the following bullets*)

- In 2023, Hengaw reported that at least 16 women were [reported](#) to be executed in Iran. Out of these, three women were convicted of drug trafficking offenses, and 11 were sentenced to death for premeditated homicide. Among these 16 executions, four cases were recorded in Isfahan's prison, and Kerman, Mashhad, and Rajaei Shahr prisons each reported two cases. Prisons in Khash, Birjand, Zahedan, Yasouj, Hamedan, and Qom also recorded two cases each. (The Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), reported that between October 10, 2022, and October 8, 2023, Iran [executed at least 17 women.](#))

- According to an informed [CHRI source](#), a 19-year-old woman, Samira Sabzianfar, had been awaiting execution in Gharchak Prison, south of Tehran, for the murder of her husband who was abusive to her, whom she was forced to marry at age 15. The child bride was due to be hanged the week of December 11, 2023, but as of December 13, 2023, the execution of Samira Sabzianfard (all reports say she is 32, not 19) was suspended. The suspension was granted to give her more time to seek forgiveness from the victim's family. A family source said Sabzianfard lost her ability to speak after being moved to solitary confinement in preparation for execution. (December 13, 2023 [Feminine Revolution](#))
- Iran Human Rights [reported](#) that 16 women known to be executed in 2022. Thirteen of them were sentenced to *qisas* for murder and three women were executed for drug-related charges; the identities of seven of the women are unknown; three of the women were Baluch and one was an Afghan national; five were executed for the murder of their husbands; at least one woman was a child bride and one in a forced marriage; one woman had committed murder in self-defense against rape by her landlord, three of the women were executed in different prisons on the same day; and none of the executions were announced by official sources.

ANNEX 1: LEGAL BACKGROUND

Death penalty, *qisas*, and lawful killing: There are several types of punishment in the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran that take away citizens' right to life. They include execution, *qisas* (retribution), lawful killing, *rajm* (stoning) and *salab* (crucifixion). Below CHRI's senior legal advisor focuses on execution, *qisas* and lawful killing.

A. Execution

The death penalty, as the severest form of physical punishment in Iranian law, is applied to different crimes:

1. Article 224 of the IRI's [Islamic Penal Code](#) calls for the death penalty in cases of *zina* (adultery):

- (a) *Zina* with blood relatives who are prohibited from marrying.

(b) *Zina* with a step-mother; in which case, the man who committed *zina* shall be sentenced to the death penalty.

(c) *Zina* of a non-Muslim man with a Muslim woman; in which case, the man who committed *zina* shall be sentenced to the death penalty.

(d) *Zina* committed by coercion or force [i.e. rape]; in which case, the man who committed *zina* by coercion or force shall be sentenced to the death penalty.

2. Article 234 of the Islamic Penal Code calls for the death penalty for the penetrator in the act of *livat* (sodomy), whether it is committed with vigor or reluctance, or if he is a married man. The penetrated man in the crime of *livat* is sentenced to death whether he is married or not. If the penetrator is a non-Muslim and the penetrated is a Muslim, only the penetrator is punished by death.

3. According to Article 262 of the Islamic Penal Code, anyone who insults Prophet Mohammad or any other holy prophet, or the 12 Shia descendants of Prophet Mohammad and his daughter Fatimah, or commits *qazf* (accusation of adultery or homosexuality) against them, shall be sentenced to death. (On April 23, 2021, it was [reported](#) that two young men were sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Court in Arak, central Iran, for insulting Prophet Mohammad).

4. An individual convicted of theft for the fourth time is punished by death based on Article 278 of the Islamic Penal Code.

5. In Article 279 of the Islamic Penal Code, one of the punishments for *moharabeh* (enmity against God) is execution.

6. The punishment for *baqy* (rebellion) and corruption on earth is death, according to Article 286 of the Islamic Penal Code. *Baqy* is considered armed rebellion against the state. As for corruption on earth, "Any person, who extensively commits felony against the bodily entity of people, offenses against internal or international security of the state, spreading lies, disruption of the economic system of the state, arson and destruction of properties, distribution of poisonous and bacterial and dangerous materials, and establishment of, or aiding and abetting in, places of corruption and prostitution, [on a scale] that causes severe disruption in the public order of the state and insecurity, or causes harsh damage to the bodily entity of people or public or private properties, or causes distribution of corruption and

prostitution on a large scale, shall be considered as *mofsed-e-fel-arz* [corrupt on earth] and shall be sentenced to death.”

7. Article 12 of the [Law of Punishments for Crimes in the Armed Forces](#) states that members of the military who give information to the enemy are deserving of the death penalty.

8. In several provisions, the Law of Punishments for Crimes in the Armed Forces also considers those who commit treason against the country as *moharebs* (rebels) and thus punishable by death.

9. Also in Article 504 of the Islamic Penal Code, “Anyone who effectively encourages combatants or those in military forces to rebel, escape, surrender, or disobey military orders, with the intention to overthrow the government or to defeat national forces against the enemy, shall be considered as *mohareb...*” and punishable by death.

10. The [Law Against Drug Trafficking](#) had numerous provisions for the death penalty until it was [revised in 2018](#). Since then the application of the death penalty has been limited to four drug-related crimes:

- Armed drug-trafficking
- Playing a leading role in organizing and financing drug-trafficking, including with the use of child-trafficking
- Previous death sentences, life sentences, or sentences of more than 15 years
- Possession or transportation of more than 50 kilos of opium and other “traditional drugs,” two kilos of heroin, or three kilos of methamphetamine

11. Articles 1 and 2 of the [Law for Punishing Disruptors of the Economy](#) calls for the death penalty against those who commit “economic terrorism.”

B. Qisas

If a person commits intentional murder, it is considered a “crime against life” and punishable by *qisas* based on Article 290 of the IRI’s Islamic Penal Code. Although the enforcement of *qisas* is the prerogative of the victim’s family, it also requires the consent of the Supreme Leader or his representative (Article 417).

C. Lawful Killing

1. According to Article 630 of the IRI's Islamic Penal Code, "When a man sees his wife committing *zina* (adultery) with another man, provided that he is certain that his wife is willing [to have sex], he can kill both of them in the same position; however, if he knows that his wife acts under coercion, he may only kill the man. The same rule applies to assault and battery."

2. In Iranian jurisprudence, *mahdour al-dam* ("someone whose blood may be legitimately spilled") is an Islamic theological term referring to a person whose life is not protected by law. There is no punishment for killing such a person. Based on Paragraph 2 of Article 295 of the original Islamic Penal Code adopted in 1991, if a person kills someone as an act of *qisas*, or kills a *mahdour al-dam*, and the court agrees with those assessments, no murder has been committed and the punishment of *qisas* or payment of blood money will not apply. Based on this provision, a number of serial murders were committed in Iran without the perpetrators being held responsible and punished, at times with the excuse that the victims' families had been persuaded to forgo *qisas*. In the 2013 revised version of the Islamic Penal Code, the same concept has been sanctioned in a more general wording in Article 302 which states killing a person "deserving of death" is not punishable.

Note

The religious and theological nature of most punishments in Iran have been challenged by many religious intellectuals who believe abolishing capital punishment is compatible with the spirit of Sharia law, not against it. However, Iran's ruling religious establishment discounts these ideas. Among the various forms of the death penalty, *qisas* is the only one that apparently cannot be stopped by the state, as it is considered the private right of citizens to seek retribution. While laws can be changed to limit the scope of *qisas* and minimize personal vengeance, experience has suggested there is little will or motivation to do so.

Evidentiary standards including the types of admissible evidence for capital offences in law and practice:

In the IRI's Islamic Penal Code, witnesses and evidence are part of what is required to prove a crime and issue the death penalty - others being confession, swearing an oath or the judge's knowledge. Article 211 of the code states, "Knowledge of the judge is defined as a certainty resulting from manifest evidence in a matter brought before him. In cases where a judgment is based on the knowledge of the judge [as the proof of the offense], he is obliged to stipulate in the judgment the manifest circumstantial and hearsay evidence that has

been the source of his knowledge.” However, the note to this Article 211 specifies that “... a mere perceptive knowledge that typically does not result in the knowledge of the judge cannot be regarded as a deciding factor in delivering a judgment.”

The right to a fair trial and due process in death penalty cases, including the appeals process

In cases that punishment for a crime is death, usually the authorities try to give the impression that they are following the law but fairness in the judicial process has been stunted by extensive powers granted to investigators and judges. Article 191 of the [Code of Criminal Procedure](#) gives suspects or their lawyers the right to review and access all or part of the case file in the investigation stage. In addition, suspects have the right to choose their own lawyer. However, the Note to Article 48 gives investigators the authority to force suspects to only select lawyers from a list approved by the Judiciary Chief. In addition, more often judicial procedures in Iran are dominated by the arbitrary decisions of judges. Moreover, contrary to Article 168 of the [Constitution](#), cases against political suspects and press offenses are not tried in open court in the presence of a jury. Instead, “security” cases are tried in the Revolutionary Court in trials that are not open to the public or held in front of a jury. Ultimately these cases follow a predetermined path into specific branches of the Appeals Court that generally uphold preliminary verdicts issued by the Revolutionary Court. If a case does reach the Supreme Court for a final review, it also gets referred to specific branches that rarely overturn sentences issued by lower courts.

Type of courts which have jurisdiction over capital offences

Issuing various forms of capital punishment is usually in the jurisdiction of the First Criminal Court. However, with the Judiciary Chief’s approval, the First Criminal Court can delegate its authority to some branches of the Revolutionary Court and the Armed Forces Court to issue death sentences.

Issues concerning the use of torture and forced confessions in death penalty cases

Although Iran has not joined the United Nations Convention against Torture, Article 38 of the Constitution clearly states, “Torture, of any kind, in order to obtain confession or information is for-bidden. It is not permissible to force someone to testify, confess, or swear an oath. Such a testimony, confession, or oath is worthless. Anyone who deviates from this

article shall be sentenced in accordance with law.” However, acts of torture play an important role in coercing suspects into making “confessions,” especially in so-called national security cases that could result in heavy sentences, including the death penalty. Despite many lawsuits filed by victims of torture, no official has ever been prosecuted in accordance with the stipulation in Article 38 of the Constitution. In Iran’s judicial system, “confessions” are the most powerful means of proving alleged crimes. Therefore, courts are willing to violate the constitutional ban on torture and overlook its application in solitary confinement, in order to obtain incriminating statements under duress. Suspects are held for long periods of time in solitary confinement and coerced into giving sham interviews in front of a camera to be televised for public consumption. In recent years, however, many people have become wise to such broadcasts and do not find credibility in any statements made outside of court without the presence of a lawyer or a fair judicial process.

Information concerning cases of secret execution

There is no precise information regarding the number of secret executions. However, the number of executions taking place without the knowledge of defense lawyers or prisoners’ families have increased, especially in regards to Kurdish, Arab and Baluch ethnic minorities.

Information concerning independent domestic mechanisms to investigate claims of torture by officials, especially in death penalty cases

Existing mechanisms in the law include the right to take investigators and judges to court for misconduct through the judiciary or the military’s judicial wing. In such cases, investigations must begin after a lawsuit is registered. However, fear often prevents lawsuits of this nature from being filed. When they are filed, the authorities either refuse to acknowledge them or fail to carry out proper investigations. State bodies that are affiliated with other branches of the state, such as the General Inspection Organization that operates under other authority of the judiciary, are not inclined to supervise and investigate their superiors. The only institution that occasionally investigates special cases, including those involving the death penalty, is the Parliamentary Committee authorized by Article 90 of the Constitution which states, “Whoever has a complaint about the operations of the legislative, the executive, or the judiciary powers can submit his complaint in writing to the [Parliament]. The [Parliament] is responsible for investigating such complaints and providing sufficient responses to them. If the executive or the judiciary power are the subject of the complaint, the [Parliament] must demand sufficient investigation and explanation from them, and it

must announce the results in due time. In cases that the complaint concerns the public, the results must be announced to the public.”

Information concerning training of the judiciary and prosecutors on the application of the death penalty under Iran’s human rights obligations

One of the main branches of the judiciary is the training department that is responsible for instructing judges and prosecutors. However, what is known about the training material indicates that emphasis is primarily placed on discerning existing laws or elevating judges for higher posts. Training sessions on human rights issues in connection with capital punishment are unheard of.

ANNEX 2: REGARDING THE LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE IRI

There continues to be no meaningful change regarding the systemic lack of accountability and the inability to seek redress and justice for even the most severe rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including violations on the application of the death penalty.

As long as human rights violators at the pinnacle of the ruling establishment and at its core, especially security and judiciary officials, continue to be rewarded and promoted, instead of punished, for their egregious rights violations, there can be little hope for seekers of justice in the Islamic Republic. The manifestation of this situation is that two individuals involved in the 1988 mass execution of political prisoners – Ebrahim Raisi, who was himself former head of the judiciary in Iran and who has been implicated in gross human rights violations and crimes against humanity for decades, and as a member of a [Death Commission](https://iranhumanrights.org/2019/02/choosing-raeesi-as-judiciary-head-will-be-a-catastrophe-for-justice-in-iran/), [<https://iranhumanrights.org/2019/02/choosing-raeesi-as-judiciary-head-will-be-a-catastrophe-for-justice-in-iran/>] was directly involved in the extrajudicial [killing of thousands of prisoners](#) who were already tried and serving their prison sentences in 1988, and Mohammad Moghiseh, aka Nasserian, who decided the fate of many executed prisoners – are now, respectively, President of the Islamic Republic and senior Supreme Court judge.

As long as the security forces, with the backing of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, the judiciary and the government, continue to target independent civil society institutions, weakening them, threatening and disbanding them, there can be no expectation of state institutions offering legal and civic support to the people.

The central obstacle to establishing accountability is the ultimate concentration of power in the office of the Supreme Leader, who is not accountable to any other person or institution, and who controls all levers of state power.

Another obstacle is the lack of an independent judiciary, which has demonstrated no independence from Iran's security organizations. It routinely assigns hardline judges to rule on political cases; defendants and their lawyers have consistently told human rights organizations that what detainees were told by their interrogators was then repeated verbatim by the judge; and judges have demonstrated a complete unwillingness to question any aspect of the judicial process, be it conduct during clearly unlawful arrests, abusive conditions of detainment and behavior of interrogators, denial of counsel and other due process violations, or prison treatment—including documented denial of medical treatment, beatings, torture and deaths in custody.

Other bodies that purportedly act as accountability mechanisms, such as the Iranian majlis's [Article 90 Commission](https://en.parliran.ir/eng/en/Content/Committees_art/Article-90-Committee-20170621), have proved completely ineffectual in addressing state abuses. [https://en.parliran.ir/eng/en/Content/Committees_art/Article-90-Committee-20170621]

State bodies under government control can technically be legally held accountable but due to the non-existence of independent regulatory agencies, or ombudsmen, in Iran, the task is carried out by state supervisory boards that base their decisions on political and security considerations of the ruling core. The General Inspection Organization, for instance, operates under the judicial branch, while the judiciary chief is appointed by the Supreme Leader.

In addition, the existence of parallel institutions that are answerable only to the Supreme Leader, for example, the Islamic Republic Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), who have now amassed significant political and economic power and hold significant sway over the judiciary, profoundly undermine accountability.

Lack of accountability is also endemic within institutions. For example, in Iran's prisons, political prisoners are often held and interrogated in special wards that are effectively "black boxes" and which answer only to their respective security authorities. For example, Ward 2A in Evin Prison is exclusively controlled by the IRGC, Ward 209 in Evin is controlled by the Intelligence Ministry, and Ward 241 by the judiciary's security division. All of these wards carry out extrajudicial activities with impunity, such as holding detainees without explanation or charge longer than allowed and, typically, in solitary confinement, denying access to a lawyer

and contact with families, employing extended and abusive interrogation tactics, and employing torture that is usually used to elicit forced “confessions.”

The growing erosion of the independence of the legal profession in Iran has also undermined accountability, as lawyers are often the last line of defense in questioning state abuses. Multiple [human rights attorneys](#) face persecution and/or currently imprisoned in Iran. In addition, adding to the already [diminished independence of the legal profession in Iran](#), new directives issued by the judiciary that allow it to investigate complaints against lawyers, sidestepping the Iranian Bar Association’s own tribunal for such investigations and effectively asserting judicial control over any attorney in Iran. Changes to legal process over the last few years, such as the requirement that defendants choose an attorney from a list of [state-approved attorneys](#) in political or national security-related cases, and the removal of the requirement that [defendants be present at appeals hearings](#) in the presence of their lawyer to challenge preliminary sentences, further erode the ability to address abuses of due process and other judicial violations.

The [lack of an independent press](#) also undermines accountability, with journalists that criticize state policies risking arrest and imprisonment under propaganda, assisting a foreign enemy, or various vague national security charges. Similarly, the inability of civil society organizations to function in an independent manner critical of the state without risking closure, arrests, etc. undermines accountability.

There are laws that deal with authorities who commit crimes. For instance, Article 38 of the Constitution and Article 578 of the Islamic Penal Code forbid torture as a means of extracting confessions. However, these laws are not enforced and few officials have been held responsible or faced justice. The exceptional cases had more to do with internal power struggles that did not necessarily serve the public’s interest.

Article 38 of the IRI’s constitution states: “All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confessions or acquiring information are forbidden. Compulsion of individuals to testify, confess, or take an oath is not permissible; and any testimony, confession, or oath obtained under duress is devoid of value and credence. Violation of this article is liable to punishment in accordance with the law.”

Article 578 of the IRI’s Islamic Penal Code: “Any civil servant or judicial or non-judicial agent who corporally mistreats and abuses an accused person in order to force him to confess, in

addition to *qisas* and *diya*, shall be sentenced to six months to three years' imprisonment; and if it is done under someone's order, only the person who has issued the order shall be sentenced to the aforementioned imprisonment; and if the accused person dies as a result of the abuses, the principal to the murder shall be sentenced to the punishment provided for a murderer, and the person who has issued the order shall be sentenced to the punishment provided for the person who has ordered a murder."

Yet ill-treatment, torture and the extraction of forced "confessions" is routine in Iranian detention centers and prisons and has been well-documented by numerous rights organizations and through testimonies by prisoners. Indeed, an entrenched pattern of officials ignoring the laws with impunity, renders attempts at accountability highly problematic, if not often impossible. This lack of unaccountability is extremely broad in the Islamic Republic, and not isolated to specific areas. Indeed, the lack of accountability encompasses all areas of human rights, including the right to life, to health, to freedom of expression and belief, to due process and a fair trial, and so forth.

Technically, victims have the right to file lawsuits against any authority, summon violators without exception in rank, demand transparent accountability, seek fair open trials in the presence of chosen independent lawyers in front of a real jury and impartial judges to seek damages or punishment. However, these rights can only be realized if citizens are guaranteed protection and principles of fairness are precisely followed in the judicial process for the recovery of truth and the implementation of justice. This is not the case at present. There are laws ostensibly safeguarding accountability in the Islamic Republic; however, these laws are routinely and consistently ignored with impunity.

In sum, effective channels for obtaining justice, remedy, and non-occurrence do not exist in the IRI, and seeking them or demanding them can land one in prison—as evidenced by the individuals past and present serving time for such demands, whether they be for accountability regarding the 1988 massacres, the deaths in state custody, the killing of protesters in the December 2017, November 2019, and September 2022 protests, and the unlawful executions, or the many other instances of rights abuses and unlawful imprisonments/deaths.

In sum, the key obstacles to victims' rights include:

- Concentration of power in an unaccountable Supreme Leader.

- Lack of any effective mechanisms to hold IRI authorities responsible for their actions.
- Lack of an independent judiciary, which has demonstrated no independence from Iran’s Supreme Leader and the Islamic Republic’s security organizations.
- Lack of independent regulatory agencies or ombudsmen.
- The growth of powerful state institutions that are answerable only to the Supreme Leader (for example, the IRGC)
- Destruction of the independence of the legal profession.
- Lack of an independent press and the inability of civil society organizations to function in an independent manner critical of the state without risking closure, arrests, etc.
- Lack of the rule of law in the Islamic Republic, where Iranian laws (or international obligations) safeguarding basic rights and ensuring accountability are routinely and consistently ignored with impunity.

ANNEX 3: REGARDING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL SECURITY CRIMES

The following questions were previously submitted by the UN to CHRI’s Senior Legal Advisor who is a prominent Iranian human rights lawyer; we copy and paste his answers here for their relevance to this report.

Q: What are the laws concerning national security crimes in Iran?

Most of the laws in this category can be found in the IRI’s [Islamic Penal Code](#), under the heading “Crimes against the national and foreign security of the State”:

- Article 498 – Anyone, with any ideology, who establishes or directs a group, society, or branch, inside or outside the country, with any name or title, that constitutes more than two individuals and aims to perturb the security of the country, if not considered as *mohareb*, shall be sentenced to two to ten years’ imprisonment.
- Article 499 – Anyone who joins, as a member, any of the groups, societies, or branches aforementioned in Article 498, shall be sentenced to three months to five years’ imprisonment, unless it is proved that he had been unaware of its aims.
- Article 500– Anyone who engages in any type of propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran or in support of opposition groups and associations, shall be sentenced to three months to one year of imprisonment. (*See Supplements below.*)
- Espionage in various forms, namely cooperating with enemy governments, recording images of prohibited zones, as detailed in Articles 503 and 508.

- Inciting rebellion among military forces to make them disobey orders, bomb threats on planes or ships, fomenting protests against national security, punishable by up to 10 years in people, in accordance with Articles 504, 511 and 512.
- Also, Article 610 states: When two or more individuals collude and conspire to commit crimes against the national or foreign security of the country or prepare the facilities to commit the aforementioned crimes, unless they are regarded as *mohareb*, shall be sentenced to two to five years' imprisonment.

Q: What are the judicial and extrajudicial procedures in national security cases, including the role of security and intelligence entities, the places of detention, the particular procedures for trial, and issues regarding access to legal counsel?

1. Iranian protesters are put on trial in special branches of the Revolutionary Court, presided by judges appointed by the Judiciary Chief and approved by the Supreme Leader. The decisions issued by these branches, in case of objection by the defendants, are usually referred to one or two special branches of the Appeals Court presided by security judges. (In Tehran, branches 36 and 54 of the Appeals Court are located inside the Revolutionary Court building on Shariati Street.) When appealed to the Supreme Court, these cases are sent to specific branches, especially Branch 38. For this reason, lawyers call these special branches "Confirmation Courts," where lower court rulings are almost always upheld.
2. Preliminary judgments by the Revolutionary Court are based on the indictments written by assistant prosecutors in charge of security magistrates. In Tehran, the office of the chief security prosecutor is located inside Evin prison.
3. The indictments are often exact copies of narratives drawn by investigators in security magistrates, based on interrogations by members Revolutionary Guards Intelligence Organization or the Ministry of Intelligence, carried out against prisoners held in solitary confinement under torture and threats. This is despite the fact that committing torture to obtain a "confession" is prohibited according to Article 38 of the [Constitution](#). In addition, Article 578 of the Islamic Penal Code states: "Any civil servant or judicial or non-judicial agent who corporally mistreats and abuses an accused person in order to force him to confess, in addition to *qisas* and *diya*, shall be sentenced to six months to three years' imprisonment; and if it is done under someone's order, only the person who has issued the order shall be sentenced to the aforementioned imprisonment; and if the accused person dies as a result of the abuses, the principal to the murder shall be sentenced to the punishment provided for a

murderer, and the person who has issued the order shall be sentenced to the punishment provided for the person who has ordered a murder.”

We have yet to see a senior official being prosecuted and punished for such crimes.

Also, in 2004, the Supreme Administrative Court ruled that solitary confinement is a violation of articles 36 and 39 of the Constitution, as well as Article 579 of the Islamic Penal Code and Note 4 of Article 169 of the Prison Regulations. Still, this form of incarceration continues to exist unlawfully, despite [legal action](#) by a group of human rights activists, including Narges Mohammadi, to try to put an end to it.

Moreover, according to Article 169 of the Islamic Penal Code, "A confession which is taken under coercion, force, torture, or mental or physical abuses, shall not be given any validity and weight and the court is obliged to interrogate the accused again.”

4. Regarding the fairness, contrary to Article 168 of the Constitution, which states, “Political and press offenses will be tried openly and in the presence of a jury, in courts of justice,” these cases are tried in the Revolutionary Court, which not only lack jurisdiction, but are often held behind closed doors in the absence of independent journalists or even family members.

The court system in the Islamic Republic of Iran is not about implementing justice or finding the truth. It is about intimidating the public, particularly regarding political and human rights cases.

5. Prisoners accused of national security crimes are denied access to lawyers of their choice in the investigation stage, in accordance with the Note to Article 48 of the [Code of Criminal Procedure](#), which specifies that these types of defendants can only use lawyers approved by the Judiciary Chief. These are lawyers loyal to the Islamic Republic with no interest in defending clients against the state.

After an indictment is issued, prisoners have the right to get their own chosen lawyer to defend them in the Revolutionary Court. However, since the start of nationwide protests in September 2022, independent lawyers have not been allowed to defend their clients even during trials in the Revolutionary Court.

6. People arrested in recent protests are being quickly prosecuted based on scenarios written by security officials, resulting in harsh sentences. On the other hand, cases against dual nationals and foreign citizens move very slowly in order to allow time to negotiate with foreign governments and obtain concessions.

As a lawyer I have experienced this prolonged process in many cases, such as the case of French academic [Roland Marchal](#), which progressed very slowly, despite objections by our legal team. He was eventually exchanged with Jalal Ruhollahnejad, an Iranian engineer imprisoned in France, wanted by U.S. authorities over sanctions charges.

Also in the case of French tourist [Benjamin Brière](#), nearly two years after a lower court decision of the lower court was issued, and in the appeal process, my colleagues and I are still waiting for the outcome of our request for appeal.

Q: What are the national security provisions used against human rights defenders, especially protesters, lawyers, and dissidents?

The charges that are most frequently leveled in these cases are:

1. “Assembly and collusion against national security,” in accordance with Article 610 of the IRI’s Islamic Penal Code.
2. “Propaganda against the state,” Article 500 of the Islamic Penal Code.

CHRI wishes to note Supplements to Article 500 of the IRI’s Islamic Penal Code that were added in January 2021 because they have been used to sentence many activists and dissidents, especially religious minorities, to long prison sentences (although not executions). These supplements are:

Whoever commits the following actions in the framework of a sect, group, association or similar organizations and uses mind control and psychological methods in real or virtual space, if the person’s behavior is not subject to capital punishment, he/she will be imprisoned and fined in the fifth degree, or sentenced to one of these two punishments and deprivation of social rights of the fifth degree. The punishment for the leadership of the mentioned sect or group is determined according to Article 130

of the Islamic Penal Code approved in 2013:

1- Any action that leads to mental or physical domination over another in such a way that the person is sexually, physically or financially exploited and abused, or as a result of harming the decision-making power of the person and encouraging them to commit crimes such as acts against chastity, consumption of alcoholic beverages, narcotics or psychoactive substances, self-harm or harming others, the person commits these actions.

2- Any deviant educational or propaganda activity that contradicts or disturbs the holy law of Islam in ways such as making illusory and false claims in religious and religious fields, such as claiming divinity, prophethood or imamate, or communication with the prophets or pure imams (peace be upon them).

Note 1: Financing, or any other type of material support, to the groups subject to this Article, knowing their nature, will result in a sentence of fifth degree imprisonment and a fine equivalent to two to five times the value of the financial aid and material support provided. If the perpetrator is a legal person, he/she will be sentenced to liquidation of assets and pay the aforementioned fine.

Note 2: The communication of the groups, subject of this Article, with entities based abroad to receive support or organizational guidance, will increase the prescribed punishment by one degree.

Note 3: The assets of the leaders and persons financing the groups subject to this Article, gained illegally or used or to commit illegal acts, as well as the properties belonging to the aforementioned groups, will be confiscated for the benefit of the national treasury.

If it is found that the property belongs to someone else, or another person has the right to it, and that property has not been placed in the hands of the aforementioned persons and groups for the purpose of committing criminal acts, the said property shall be returned to the owner or owner of the right, and the perpetrator shall be fined the equivalent value of said property, or if it is found that the criminal has a debt towards another and the property used in committing the crime belongs to him/her and is not gained through crime, the said property is confiscated in favor of the

creditor or creditors and the criminal is sentenced to a fine equal to the value of the confiscated property.

Note 4: Education and research, as well as other similar measures, aimed at rejecting and responding to the doubts and criticisms presented by groups subject to this Article, are outside the scope of the ruling of this Article and Article 499 of this law.

3. “Anyone who, by any means, insults Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, and/or the Supreme Leader (Ali Khamenei),” Article 514 of the IRI’s Islamic Penal Code.

4. “Making false accusations,” Article 698 of the IRI’s Islamic Penal Code, usually applied against journalists and social media activists.

5. “Waging war” (*moharebeh*), “corruption on earth” and “rebellion” are the most serious charges used, as these charges can carry the death penalty, Articles 282, 286 and 287 of the IRI’s Islamic Penal Code.

ANNEX 4: ASSAULTS ON DUE PROCESS

The assault on human rights lawyers in Iran has been occurring amid a backdrop of two previous changes to the legal process in Iran that have facilitated the authorities’ ability to convict defendants—including in capital cases—in politically motivated prosecutions on unsubstantiated charges.

- In January 2018, Iranian courts began citing the [Note to Article 48](#) of [Iran’s Criminal Procedures Regulations](#) as justification for forcing defendants to choose their legal counsel from a state-approved list of attorneys, in cases involving “national security” and other charges of a political nature. The note also allows a delay in an individual’s access to counsel. Human rights lawyers, activists, dissidents, labor leaders, independent journalists and other human rights defenders or any perceived critics of the state are typically prosecuted under national security-related charges; accordingly, they are denied their choice of counsel. Human rights lawyer Hossein Ahmadianiaz, spoke to CHRI about this use of Note 48: “How can a lawyer handpicked and approved by the security establishment defend a suspect accused of political crimes? On one

side, you have a person accused of political and security crimes, and on the other side there are representatives of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Intelligence Ministry who show up in Revolutionary Courts run by their own people. On top of all that, you want to force suspects to hire one of your own state lawyers?

<https://iranhumanrights.org/2018/03/iranian-lawyers-judiciarys-mandatory-list-of-approved-counsel-sets-dangerous-precedent/>

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1393/02/03/346898/%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%86-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-570-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A2%D8%A6%DB%8C%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C-%DA%A9%DB%8C%D9%81%D8%B1%DB%8C>

- In a second blow to due process, in November 2019, Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi ruled that Appeal Courts could issue verdicts [without the presence](#) of defendants and their attorneys. Ending the right to an in-person hearing in the appeal process has rendering the appeal process effectively meaningless in Iran.

<https://iranhumanrights.org/2019/11/rule-allowing-appeals-hearings-without-defendants-present-is-blattant-violation-of-law/>

Article 450 of the [Law on Criminal Procedure](#) requires the presence of the accused and his/her representative or counsel (in person) at appeal court hearings. Allegedly in an effort to expedite criminal cases, Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raeesi drafted a legal proposal in May 2019 to remove this requirement. The proposal was sent to parliament and was approved by Parliament's judiciary committee. It was to be debated in the main session of parliament, but delays prompted Raeesi to request permission directly from the Supreme leader Ali Khamenei to drop the requirement. In July 2019, Khamenei issued permission, and since then on many occasions the appeal courts have been waiving the requirement.

<https://tinyurl.com/y3mjbhtx>

<https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1393/02/03/346898/%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%86-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-570-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A2%D8%A6%DB%8C%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C-%DA%A9%DB%8C%D9%81%D8%B1%DB%8C>

Long-standing denials of due process/fair trial rights, meanwhile continue. Human rights lawyers' ability to do their job and defend their clients is undermined by routine violations that include:

- Individuals are arrested without warrant, and during the arrest they have their homes searched/property confiscated without warrant or consent. They are often taken to unknown locations and held incommunicado and in solitary confinement, while the families are given no information regarding the detainee's charges or condition.
- Detainees are routinely held for prolonged periods without charge or access to counsel; if their case involves "national security" charges, when they are allowed counsel they are restricted to judiciary-approved lawyers. (*See above.*) When detainees' own lawyers persist in trying to defend them, the lawyers themselves are prosecuted and imprisoned.
- During interrogations, detainees are forced to make self-incriminating statements, which are extracted under torture or threats to the detainees and their families. These "confessions" are often aired on Iran's state TV, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). Convictions are frequently made on the basis of "evidence" that consists of these forced "confessions," even in capital cases. Defendants' statements in court that the confessions were extracted under torture are routinely ignored by the court.
- Trials themselves are often closed, brief and do not adhere to international standards for a fair trial. Defense attorneys are not provided with the full case files or given adequate time to review the files; they are not allowed to respond fully in court to the

charges and evidence presented; and they are not given the opportunity to fully provide evidence for the defense.

- The judiciary has demonstrated no independence from Iran’s security organizations. It routinely assigns hardline judges to rule on political cases; defendants and their lawyers have consistently told human rights organizations that what detainees were told by their interrogators was then repeated verbatim by the judge; and judges have demonstrated an unwillingness to question any aspect of the judicial process, be it conduct during arrests, conditions of detainment—including documented and often visible evidence of torture, behavior of interrogators, ignored statements in court by defendants and their counsel that any “confessions” were extracted under torture and are thus retracted, denial of counsel, or prison treatment—including documented denial of medical treatment, beatings, and deaths in custody.

ANNEX 5: INTERVIEW WITH ATENA DAEMI ON MURDER AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN IRAN

Excerpt from an April 27, 2022 CHRI interview with the prominent human rights activist [Atena Daemi](#):

<https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/04/interview-aten-daemi-was-jailed-in-iran-for-advocating-womens-rights-now-shes-free-and-refusing-to-be-silent/>

“Interview: Atena Daemi was Jailed in Iran for Advocating Women’s Rights. Now She’s Free and Refusing to be Silent”

“These [women] prisoners [in Gharchak prison] had been incarcerated for various reasons, from murder to theft and [extramarital] relations. I talked to all of them and asked a series of questions. What emerged was that, regardless of their crime, all were victims of child marriage. Some 90 percent of the women in Lakan Prison were either divorced or had been imprisoned for having relations outside marriage and killing their husbands. I found it very strange that in a small prison like Lakan, with a maximum of 120 women prisoners, a large percentage of them had committed murder. This made me pay closer attention to why so many murders had been committed by women in a small provincial city. Most of them had

killed their husbands. When I spoke to them, I tried to uncover some of the important secret layers of their lives, about the conditions inside their parents' home, or the way they had been treated after getting their first period. These conversations made me realize that the root cause of their current condition was often the predominance of patriarchal perspectives in the family and society. For instance, many of them had been married off at a young age only because girls are considered a financial burden. Many of them had been forced to get married between the ages of 10 to 16 with men whom they did not know. After marriage, they were prevented from going back to school and participating in society. At first, they thought everything was okay but as the years went by and their lives began to change, they encountered a series of issues that made them think about transforming their lives. Since many of them didn't have satisfying personal and sexual relations with their husbands, they had relationships with other individuals, which ultimately resulted in the husbands being murdered. Some former child brides had divorced their husbands but due to lack of sufficient support, had fallen into a life of crime, theft, or getting hooked on drugs. When I examined these circumstances, I understood that they were all rooted in child marriage. The children of these women are also victims of child marriage. One of the prisoners had been married at a young age to a boy as young as herself. After a few years, the husband started a relationship with another woman and his wife killed him out of anger. This shows that child marriage produce lots of victims and can wreck many lives. Apart from this issue, one of my main activities was surrounding the death penalty and *qisas* (retribution as a form of legal punishment). When there were donation drives to save a person from execution with the payment of "blood money" to victims' families, I would often hear that some people would refuse to donate because the killer was a woman who had killed her husband. I find this very sad. I had met these women in prison and talked to them and knew that nobody knew about their troubled lives. They were abandoned, waiting to be hanged for 'honor killings.' It's awful."