



IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION CENTER NEWSLETTER

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Election Unrest Continues

More than two months after the June 12 election, there are few street demonstrations and signs of public unrest. Yet the steady stream of reports concerning the mistreatment of those arrested, the mysterious deaths of students and activists held in detention, and speculation regarding the secret mass burials of protesters killed by the regime are fueling the public's growing sense of frustration and anger.

In late July, following the tragic deaths of several protesters in detention facilities and prisons, the Iranian *Majlis* formed a Special Committee to Investigate the Conditions of the Recent Arrestees. The seven member Committee, headed by Parviz Sarouri (a representative of Tehran), is responsible for investigating allegations of detainee mistreatment. His Committee was charged with the task of visiting detainees and inspecting conditions in numerous detention facilities and prisons.

The Committee met with well-known reformists Mostafa Tajzadeh, Mohammad Ali Abtahi and Mohammad Atrianfar around mid-August. All of them were arrested and are currently being detained. The Committee reported that the trio



Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani, New Head of the Judiciary.
(Source: *Fars News Agency*)

was in "good physical and psychological condition," and that the investigation into their arrests and detention will continue.

Notorious Detention Facility Shut Down

Pursuant to an executive order by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, the infamous Kahrizak detention facility was shut down in late July. Over the past several months, Kahrizak had acquired a reputation as one of the regime's most abusive and

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terrifying detention facilities.

News of the systematic and persistent abuse of election protesters at this facility peaked in July, after it was announced that the death of Mohsen Ruh'ulamini, the son of a conservative advisor to Mohsen Rezai (one of the presidential candidates), occurred while he was detained at Kahrizak.

Prior to being shut down, Kahrizak was declared to be “unsanitary” and wholly inadequate when it came to “ensur[ing] the rights of the detainees.” Over one hundred detainees were transferred to this detention facility after the election unrests. At least four of them allegedly lost their lives while being detained there. Recently, Brigadier-General Azizullah Rajabzadeh announced that everyone who was detained at Kahrizak detention facility was taken there pursuant to judicial orders. The facility opened in 2001 and was primarily used to detain “thugs and hooligans” arrested by the government.

Number of Dead Detainees on the Rise

The body count of the number of individuals who were arrested or disappeared following the June 12 election crackdown by the government is steadily on the rise.

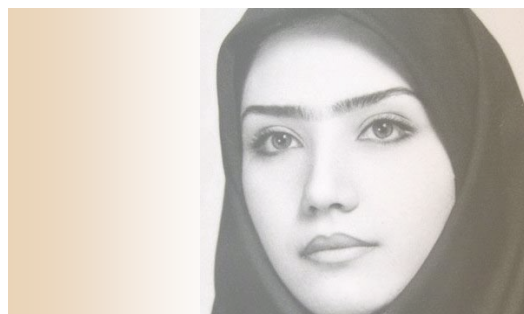
Saideh Pour-Agha'i, the only daughter of an Iran-Iraq war veteran, was arrested for chanting ‘Allah-u Akbar’ on the roof of her house in early August. She was allegedly raped and killed in prison. Her mother was reportedly able to identify her body in

Allegations of Rape in Prison

In mid-August, in a letter addressed to Hashemi Rafsanjani, the head of the Expediency Council, former presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi requested that the Council investigate allegations regarding the rape of post-election detainees. Mr. Karroubi claimed he had spoken to four victims who were unwilling to come forward because their security was not guaranteed. He further alleged that Kahrizak detention facility had been shut down specifically as a result of rampant sexual assaults suffered by both men and women in that facility. The Council never formally responded to Karroubi's letter, but other regime officials such as Ali Larijani, the head of the *Majlis*, vehemently denied the allegations. Larijani also asked The Special Committee to Investigate the Condition of the Recent Arrestees to visit with Mr. Karroubi and inspect any evidence he may have regarding his allegations.

a morgue in southern Tehran twenty days after her disappearance, but the authorities refused to hand over her remains for burial. Reports suggest that Pour-Agha'i was secretly buried in section 302 of Tehran's *Behesht-e Zahra* cemetery. It has been reported that her body had been mutilated in order to cover up any signs of rape and torture. Some of this information has been difficult to verify given the regime's unwillingness to cooperate in the investigation.

Taraneh Mousavi was another alleged victim of the regime's brutality in prison. She was arrested in late June at a demonstration at Qoba Mosque. Two weeks later, her burnt body was found on the side of a road outside Tehran. According to her friends, she was violently raped and tortured in prison. The authorities have denied her arrest, claimed that the "person of interest" is actually a forty year old who currently resides in Canada, and paraded her alleged family on state television to counter rumors of her death. The spokesperson for the Special Committee to Investigate the Conditions of the Recent Arrestees has flatly denied government claims, and continues to allege that Mousavi was in fact killed while in detention.



Taraneh Mousavi, a protestor who allegedly died in detention (Source unknown)

Behzad Mohajer, the uncle of a well-known blogger, disappeared a few days after the election. His body was handed over to his family for burial fifty days later. He had apparently been shot in the heart. The authorities gave no explanation regarding what had happened to him, and kept a close watch on the burial procession to ensure that it would not turn into a political event.

New Head of the Iranian Judiciary

In mid-August 2009, the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, appointed Ayatollah Sadegh Amoli Larijani as the new head of the Judiciary. Prior to this, Larijani was a member of the Guardian Council and the Assembly of Experts.

The previous head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Shahroudi, will go on to become a high-ranking member of the Guardian Council. In his first official act as the new head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Larijani ordered the execution of Behnoud Shoja'i to be halted. Shoja'i had allegedly committed murder at the age of seventeen. Larijani issued similar orders regarding the execution of six other

individuals. It is unclear if the suspension orders are indefinite or temporary.

Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi had succeeded Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi as the head of the Judiciary in August 1999. At the time, he claimed to have received a Judiciary that was in "ruins." Despite this, Shahroudi served as the head of the Judiciary for two consecutive five year terms. Following the post-June 12 unrest and crackdown, a group of Iranian lawyers, jurists and human rights activists declared that Shahroudi had succeeded in turning the Judiciary's "ruins" into a "land of the dead."

New Prosecutor of Tehran

In line with his policies to clean house and reinvigorate the Judiciary's image, newly appointed head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, removed Saeed Mortazavi, Prosecutor of Tehran, from his post. Mortazavi, who is known to many as the "Butcher of the Press," was removed from his post after countless reports surfaced regarding the rape, torture and death of election protesters in various detention facilities. A few days after his removal, Mortazavi was appointed to the post of Deputy Prosecutor of Iran. He was replaced by a relatively unknown figure, Abbas Ja'fari Dolatabadi. Dolatabadi was previously the head of the Ministry of Justice office in Khuzestan province.

IHRDC would like to thank Stanley Katz, Professor Emeritus of Biomedical Sciences at Quinnipiac University, for his gracious loan of a collection of Iranian and American newspapers he gathered during the 1978 - 1979 Iranian Revolution. Professor Katz was the former Dean and Project Director of the Imperial Medical Center of Iran in Tehran from 1975 - 1978. His collection is currently being uploaded on IHRDC's Database, the *Aadel* Collection. The *Aadel* Collection (www.iranhrdc.org) includes documents collected during IHRDC's investigation and reporting, and is accessible to human rights advocates, students, researchers, and members of the public.

Legal Interns at IHRDC

This summer, IHRDC hosted six law interns from law schools throughout the United States and Canada. One of these interns, **Maria-Elena Kolovos**, described her summer experience at IHRDC this way:

"Interning at IHRDC was exceptionally rewarding; the experience secured my career commitment to international human rights. The importance of IHRDC's work became startlingly clear as Iran's human rights crisis unfolded before our eyes ... My responsibilities and the lessons I learned were several and varied; they ranged from researching the legal framework for an investigation of human rights abuses suffered by Iran's minority populations, to understanding international treaties ... Over all, my time with IHRDC inspired me and left me humbled and much more attuned to the complex nature of human rights work."

IHRDC's New Report

The IHRDC released a new report titled *Deadly Fatwa: Iran's 1988 Prison Massacre*. The report documents the Iranian government's systematic interrogation, torture and execution of political prisoners during the summer of 1988. The massacres occurred pursuant to a *fatwa* issued by Ayatollah Khomeini in the summer of 1988. The victims ranged from prisoners who had served their sentences but refused to recant their political beliefs, to former prisoners who were rearrested. Many families were never informed about the executions, and thousands were buried in unmarked mass graves. The government recently bulldozed a mass grave site at Khavaran Cemetery in Tehran. *Deadly Fatwa* is based, in part, on information obtained through interviews conducted by IHRDC with survivors and family members of victims. The report can be found at www.iranhrdc.org.