



Lawyers at Risk in Iran

In October and November 2022, the Law Society published statements about the arrest, detention, and ill-treatment of lawyers, as well as the lack of access to legal representation, in Iran following widespread protests there. The Law Society is especially concerned about the following developments since the publication of those statements.

In addition to the arrested lawyers mentioned in our previous statements, at least another 33 lawyers have been arrested and detained. This means that at least 66 lawyers have been arrested and detained since September 2022. Eleven of these lawyers have now been sentenced and 47 lawyers have been released on bail. For some lawyers, there is conflicting information on whether they are still detained, while, for other lawyers, information on their whereabouts is lacking altogether. We have been able to verify the location where seven lawyers are being detained.

Detained (9)	Conflicting Information on Detention/Release (3)	Released (47)	No Information on Detention/Release After Arrest (7)
Firouzeh Zahra Khordechi, Amir Dehghani, Mostafa Nili, Ahmad Ali Barani, Saeed Ataei Kachouei, Saeideh Mirghorbani, Hadi Razavi, Reza Hamzei (sentenced), Giti Shafie	Golaleh VatanDoost, Mohammad Rezaei, Mina Bozorgi Koushalshahi	Milad Panahipour, Saeed Jalilian, Mahsa Gholamalizadeh, Babak Paknia, Roza Etemadansari, Mohammad Reza Faqih, Saeed Sheikh (sentenced), Rouhollah Mohammad Rezaei, Sina Yousefi (sentenced), Ghasem Bodi Bonab (sentenced), Amir Mehdipour (sentenced), Hossein Rezaei, Qahraman Karimi, Amin Adel Ahmadian, Negin Kiani (sentenced), Nazanin Salari, Bahar Sahraiyani, Mahmoud Taravatruy, Ghodsieh Ghodsbin, Astoreh Maryam Ansari, Ali Reza Zare, Mohammad Hadi Jafarpour, Mehdi Safari, Hassan Younessi, Hassan Asadi Zeidabadi, Arash Keykhosravi (sentenced), Zahra Nazari Gomishani, Ali	Parisa Qasemi, Behnam Chegini, Ebrahim Gaedi, Marzieh Mohebi, Ziba Sabeti, Reza Absalan (sentenced), Farzaneh Zilabi



		<p>Khanzai, Seyed Hossein Pai-Lakhi, Mitra Izadifar, Shohreh Hadadian, Mehran Heidari, Massoud Keikhani, Maryam Arvin (deceased), Oveis Hamed Tavakkoli, Mohammad Ali Kamfirouzi, Fereshteh Tabanian (sentenced), Amin Samani, Ali Sharifzadeh Ardakani, Farzaneh Akbarian Nasab, Elham Zeraatpisheh, Amir Afshar Najafi (sentenced), Maryam Sadrnia, Behzad Hakimizadeh, Sara Hamzehzadeh, Fariba Tavakoli, Ebrahim Sabeti (sentenced)</p>	
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Lawyer	Prison
Firouzeh Zahra Khordechi	Prison of Isfahan
Mostafa Nili	Rajai-Shahr Prison in Karaj
Saeed Ataei Kachouei	Qezelhesar Prison in Karaj
Saeideh Mirghorbani	Police Lockup - Babolsar
Golaleh VatanDoost	Juvenile Correctional Centre in Sanandaj
Mina Bozorgi Koushalshahi	Kachouei Prison in Karaj
Giti Shafie	Adel Abad Prison in Shiraz

Sentences Imposed on Lawyers

Eleven lawyers have been sentenced, with an average term of 11.6 months in prison (calculated with reference to the term that is enforced under Iranian law, namely - in case of multiple sentences - the most severe). Regarding the sentencing of non-lawyers during the protests, at least 777 were sentenced to a total of approximately 14,063 months of imprisonment, totalling an average of 18 months per person.

Seven lawyers were sentenced on conviction of "propaganda against the regime". Sentences for this crime can range from three months to one year, with the lawyers generally receiving sentences of a longer duration within this range.

Two lawyers were sentenced to two years in prison on conviction of "assembly and collusion against national security". Sentences for this crime can range between two to five years imprisonment (for collusion, conspiracy or preparation), two to ten years (for establishment or leadership of a group or organisation), and three months to five years (for joining any

group committing this crime). Lawyers' sentences for this crime were of a shorter duration within this range.

The charges on which the remaining two lawyers were convicted and sentenced are unknown.

The lawyers sentenced have also generally been barred from leaving the country and had their electronic devices confiscated.

Non-lawyers, including protestors, activists, journalists, students and teachers, have been sentenced on other national security charges that carry harsher penalties. The wording of most of these charges is vague, thereby allowing for arbitrary application by prosecutors and judges.

Reports indicate that at least nine of the eleven lawyers sentenced are not in detention. This seems to indicate that the prosecution of lawyers and the sentences imposed on those who were convicted are a tactic of the government to deter lawyers from practising their profession and providing legal assistance to protestors and others.

In the first half of December 2022, Reza Hamzei was sentenced to one year in prison on conviction of "propaganda against the regime" and banned from practising law for two years by the Qazvin Revolutionary Court. Reports suggest that he is still being detained.

In the second half of December 2022, Saeed Sheikh was sentenced to two years in prison on conviction of "assembly and collusion against national security" and one year on conviction of "propaganda against the regime" by the Tehran Revolutionary Court. According to Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, in cases of multiple crimes of different types, a punishment will be issued for all of them, but only the most severe punishment will be enforced: two years in prison. Sheikh reported that he is also barred from leaving the country. He has been released on bail.

Sina Yousefi and Amir Mehdipour were both sentenced to six months imprisonment on conviction of "propaganda against the regime". Both also received a two-year ban on leaving the country and had their electronic devices confiscated. In addition, reports indicate that both had their licenses to practise law revoked. Both have been released on bail.

Ghasem Bodi Bonab was sentenced to five months imprisonment on conviction of "propaganda against the regime" by the Revolutionary Court. He also received a ban on leaving the country and a ban on practising law for two years, as well as having his electronic devices confiscated. He was also sentenced to three months and one day of imprisonment by Branch 112 of the Criminal Court and received a fine of 8 million tomans, which has been suspended for 5 years. He has been released on bail.

Negin Kiani was sentenced to one year imprisonment on conviction of "propaganda against the regime", received a ban on leaving the country and had her electronic devices confiscated. In addition, reports indicate that she has been banned from practising law. On 13 November 2022, she was released on a 500 million toman bail after being detained for 23 days. Some reports indicate that on appeal her sentence was changed from one year imprisonment to a 10 million toman fine.

Fereshteh Tabanian was sentenced to three months imprisonment on conviction of “propaganda against the regime” by Branch One of the Mahshahr Revolutionary Court. She has also received a ban on leaving the country and had her electronic devices confiscated. She has been released on bail.

Reza Absalan was sentenced to one year imprisonment and a fine of 50 million tomans by Dehloran Revolutionary Court. It is not clear whether he is currently detained.

In January 2023, Amir-Afshar Najafi was sentenced to 17 months imprisonment: one year for “propaganda against the regime” and five months for “spreading falsehood to disturb public opinion”. He has also received a ban on leaving the country and a ban on practising law for two years, and had his electronic devices confiscated. He has been released on bail.

Arash Keykhosravi was sentenced to two years in prison on conviction of “assembly and collusion against national security”. He was arrested on 19 November 2022 in Tehran and then transferred to an unidentified location. Security forces searched his house and confiscated some of his belongings. He has been released on bail.

Ebrahim Sabeti was sentenced to one year in prison and received a ban on leaving the country and a ban on practising law for two years. He also had his electronic devices confiscated. He has likely been released on bail.

Arrests of Lawyers

Thirty-three lawyers have been arrested since the publication of our previous statements in October and November 2022. Six of these lawyers have been sentenced. We were able to verify the following information on the arrests of the other 27 lawyers.

The lawyers arrested have generally faced high rates of bail despite the Code of Criminal Procedure stating that the rate of bail is to be commensurate with the severity of the alleged crime. Some lawyers arrested have also had their licenses to practise law revoked.

On 8 October 2022, Saeed Ataei Kachouei and Mina Bozorgi Koushalshahi were arrested in Karaj. Saeed Ataei Kachouei was transferred to Qezelhesar Prison, and Mina Bozorgi Koushalshahi to Kachouei Prison, both in Karaj. Reports indicate that both have been held in custody for “gathering and colluding against national security”. While Saeed Ataei Kachouei’s bail request has been denied, there are conflicting reports as to whether Mina Bozorgi Koushalshahi has since been released on bail.

On 16 November 2022, Oveis Hamed Tavakkoli was arrested by security agents in Tehran and then transferred to Evin Prison. He was reportedly released a few days later.

On 21 November 2022, Zahra Nazari Gomishani was arrested by security agents at her office in Sari, Mazandaran Province. Her electronic devices were confiscated. She has reportedly since been released on bail after 22 days in detention.

On 27 November 2022, Maryam Arvin was arrested in Sirjan and was reportedly being held at Korhan Prison in Sirjan. She was allegedly arrested after a verbal conflict with a judge of the Revolutionary Court in a case where she was representing an arrested protestor. Reports indicate that security forces beat and dragged her during the arrest. On 12 December 2022, she was released on bail. On 8 February 2023, the Kerman Province Bar Association announced her death. Official reports state that the cause of death was suicide. So far, no further information has emerged regarding this case.

On 3 December 2022, Saeideh Mirghorbani was arrested in Babolsar by security forces. Reports indicate that she had been summoned to the Babolsar Security Police Department. The Security Police requested that she apologise for her social media posts and sign a statement to that effect. When she refused, the Security Police arrested her. Reports indicate that she is still being detained at the Police Lockup in Babolsar.

On 5 December 2022, Farzaneh Akbarian Nasab was arrested in Yasuj by judicial order. She was arrested on the charges of “propaganda against the regime” and “assembly and collusion against national security”. On 26 December 2022, she was reportedly released on bail after 20 days in detention.

On 8 December 2022, Maryam Sadrnia was arrested by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in her home in Tehran and then transferred to Evin Prison. On 26 December 2022, she was reportedly released on bail.

On 13 December 2022, Ziba Sabeti was arrested in her home in Tehran and then transferred to an unidentified location.

On 14 December 2022, Mohammad Ali Kamifrouzi was arrested in Tehran. Mr Kamifrouzi's family reported that he was arrested while carrying out his work at the Justice Office in Tehran. His house was subsequently searched by security forces. He is the lawyer of several prominent activists and journalists, including Niloufar Hamedei and Elaleh Mohammadi, the two female journalists arrested for their coverage of the death of Mahsa Amini in police custody. Mr Kamifrouzi's lawyer, Mohammad Ali Bagherpour, reported that his client had not received a summons, was unaware of the charges against him and had been detained without any legal formalities. He was released on bail from Great Tehran Penitentiary (Fashafouyeh) after three weeks of detention.

On 3 January 2023, Elham Zeraatpisheh was arrested in Marvdasht, Shiraz, while acting in her capacity as a lawyer, and transferred to an unidentified location. On 7 February 2023, she was reportedly released on bail.

On 8 January 2023, Ali Sharifzadeh Ardakani was summoned to a court in Karaj after a complaint by the prosecutor, charged with “propaganda against the regime” and then released on a 100 million toman bail the same day. It has been reported that Mr Ardakani had been charged after he had publicly stated that his client Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini had been severely tortured by security forces until he confessed to his alleged involvement in the killing of a Basij member and that his subsequent hanging had been unjust. Subsequently, a judge issued a judicial supervision order prohibiting him from engaging in any activities on social media for one year.

On 9 January 2023, Behzad Hakimizadeh was arrested at his home in Saqqez by order of Branch Two of the Saqqez Prosecutor's Office and transferred to the detention centre of the Intelligence Department in Sanandaj. During the arrest, his mobile phone and laptop were confiscated. Reports indicate that he was arrested for allegedly being associated with criminal gangs. Reports also indicate that intelligence officers have tried to obtain a forced confession from him, including by threatening family members. On 12 February 2023, he was reportedly released on a 500 million toman bail.

In mid-January 2023, Giti Shafie was arrested in Shiraz and transferred to Adel Abad Prison in Shiraz. Reports indicate that she is currently on hunger strike.

Sara Hamzehzadeh was arrested in her office in Shahrood and charged with "propaganda against the regime". During the arrest, security forces seized her two mobile phones. She has reportedly since been released on bail after Branch 5 of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Shahrood Revolutionary Court set bail at 80 million tomans.

Fariba Tavakoli was summoned by the Tehran Prosecutor's Office (Security) and charged with "propaganda against the regime". She has since reportedly been released on bail.

In early February 2023, Farzaneh Zilabi was summoned by Branch 13 of the Ahvaz Revolutionary Court. Reports indicate that the charges against her include "insulting the Supreme Leader", "publishing lies in cyberspace", "propaganda against the regime", "assembly and collusion against national security" and "membership in a hostile group".

Finally, six lawyers were arrested in Khorasan Province, who have since been released on bail: Ali Khanzai, Seyed Hossein Pai-Lakhi, Mitra Izadifar, Shohreh Hadadian, Mehran Heidari, and Massoud Keikhani. Marzieh Mohebi was also arrested in Khorasan Province, but we do not have further information on the circumstances of her arrest or whereabouts.

Ebrahim Gaedi and Amin Samani were arrested in Fars Province, but we do not have further information on the circumstances of their arrests or whereabouts. Amin Samani has since reportedly been released on bail.

Hadi Razavi was arrested, but we do not have further information on the circumstances of his arrest or whereabouts.

In addition to these arrests, there have been multiple threats made against lawyers.

For example, reports indicate that the Ministry of Intelligence has summoned and threatened the lawyers representing the family of Mahsa Amini in the case concerning her death. The Ministry reportedly banned these lawyers from interviews with the media and otherwise discussing the case.

In mid-January 2023, another lawyer - Ebrahim Parsamehr - was assaulted by unidentified individuals. He has previously represented several civil and trade union activists. There is no indication that a police investigation has been commenced regarding this attack.

In addition, lawyers who have already been imprisoned have allegedly had new cases opened against them or previous sentences being enforced. For example, two new cases have allegedly been opened against Mohammad Najafi, who is currently serving a 54-month term in Arak Central Prison where he has been held since 2018. These cases would relate to comments that he allegedly made in prison in support of the protests.

Another lawyer, who was arrested on 7 November 2022, Mostafa Nili, is allegedly now facing the enforcement of a previously imposed four-year prison sentence, as well as charges of "propaganda against the regime" and "assembly and collusion against national security" following his arrest, with bail set at 600 million rials.

Lack of Access to Justice and a Fair Trial

There is an almost complete lack of access to legal representation for those arrested during the ongoing protests, as well as violations of fair trial guarantees for those who are prosecuted. Protestors' confessions have often been obtained by coercion and torture and subsequently been used as evidence in proceedings against them. Protestors are tried without legal representation or are allocated a lawyer from a list of State-approved counsel, with the lawyers of their choice being denied access to their clients.

It has been reported that these judiciary-appointed lawyers are linked to the Basij paramilitary force. Families of protestors on trial have alleged that such lawyers make little effort to present a proper defence and their only statements in court are dictated by the judiciary and security forces. For example, the family of Mohammad Mehdi Karami was unable to reach his judiciary-appointed lawyer to provide additional evidence and to proceed with an appeal. Some such lawyers have charged extremely high fees, with one lawyer demanding \$250,000 from the family of the accused. State agents also allegedly dissuade detained protestors from seeking independent counsel through bribery.

Although the exact number of people arrested is uncertain and increases day by day, 20,000 appear to have been arrested since September 2022. At least four individuals have been executed so far: Mohsen Shekari on 8 December 2022, Majidreza Rahnavard on 12 December 2022, and Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Seyed Mohammad Hosseini on 7 January 2023. At least 20 have been sentenced to death and there are up to 100 individuals that are facing charges of "waging war against God" or "corruption on Earth" that carry the death penalty.

Charges that carry the death penalty are being interpreted broadly to apply to a wide range of activities. The four individuals executed thus far have been accused of involvement in the injury or death of security officers, without credible evidence having been presented against them. Death sentences have also been issued for varying forms of participation in the protests, including setting fire to litter bins and throwing stones. For example, reports indicate that Javad Rohi has received three death sentences for allegedly setting fire to a Quran and a police checkpoint and for chanting slogans against the mandatory hijab. National security charges have also been brought in cases where other charges could have been brought.

Most trials have been brief and have been held behind closed doors. Majidreza Rahnavard was executed only 23 days after his arrest and only two days after his death sentence was issued. Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Seyed Mohammad Hosseini's trials lasted less than a week. Both of their lawyers, Mohammad Aghasi and Ali Sharifzadeh Ardakani, respectively, were not permitted to represent them in court and stated that the executions were carried out so hastily that there had been no time to apply for a retrial. On 10 November 2022, Amir Mohammad Jalali was sentenced to three years in prison and two years of exile after a trial lasting three minutes, in which Jalali had 30 seconds to defend himself.

There is also an increased use of online trials for those arrested. For example, Ali (Makan) Davari, a 19-year-old protestor, was tried in an online hearing and sentenced to death on 24 December 2022 on charges including "waging war against God" and "membership in a group to disrupt national security".

We call on the Iranian authorities to:

- immediately and unconditionally release all lawyers and human rights defenders who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained and drop all charges against them;
- pending their release, guarantee the psychological and physical integrity of the lawyers and human rights defenders, and comply with international standards on conditions of detention;
- ensure access to legal representation of their own choice for all those arrested and detained, including minors and those facing a death sentence;
- ensure respect for fair trial guarantees in any proceedings brought against lawyers, human rights defenders and others;
- halt all executions of the death penalty and refrain from imposing such a sentence, including on minors; and
- guarantee that all lawyers and human rights defenders in Iran can carry out their professional activities without intimidation, hindrance or improper interference.