



SILENCED, EXPELLED, IMPRISONED

REPRESSION OF STUDENTS AND
ACADEMICS IN IRAN

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Cover photo: Iranian high school students sit for their university entrance examination in Tehran on June 25, 2009. Many students and university lecturers were arrested and jailed following mass protests against the disputed re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad earlier that month.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Universities are the voice of the people and that is why they try to silence them.”

A former student at Amir Kabir University in Tehran and political prisoner, speaking from exile, March 2013¹

At his inauguration in August 2013, Iran’s newly elected president, Hassan Rouhani, a self-described moderate, inherited a country in crisis. The eight-year presidency of his predecessor, the two-term President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, had seen a further deterioration in human rights. Iran had become increasingly isolated diplomatically due to western and Arab suspicion over its nuclear ambitions, and weakened economically by deep biting international trade and financial sanctions.

During his successful election campaign and in his first speeches following his inauguration, President Rouhani appeared at pains to distance himself from his predecessor, and the policies and rhetoric of the former President. He appeared intent on offering a more conciliatory and constructive approach to policy-making and relationship-building, at home and internationally, when pursuing the perceived political, strategic and economic interests of Iran and its 78 million people. It was a recognition of the popular mood for change and an end to Iran’s international isolation that his election victory reflected, and appeared to open a prospective new, more promising chapter in Iran’s international relations. Within months, the interim agreement concluded in Geneva between President Rouhani’s government and the USA and other permanent member states of the UN Security Council plus Germany in November 2013, under which Iran committed to freeze aspects of its nuclear programme in return for temporary and reversible sanction reliefs. Yet, within Iran itself, the limits of the new President’s powers and freedom of action were also made manifest by conservative members of the parliament, who vetoed the appointment of several of President Rouhani’s nominees to head government ministries, including his proposed candidate for Minister of Science, Research and Technology (hereafter Minister of Science), who would have the responsibility for overseeing the operation of Iran’s universities. As that early setback showed, despite President Rouhani’s popular mandate, Iran’s clerically-dominated politico-religious establishment, headed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and hardliners within its security and judicial sectors, retain enormous power and influence and, to a large extent, continue to have the determining voice on the nature and pace of change in Iran. The sentencing of student activist Maryam Shafi’ Pour to a seven year prison term in March 2014 after a Revolutionary Court convicted her of charges including “spreading propaganda against the system” provided further evidence of the continuing reach and power intolerance of criticism of the authorities.

Since Hassan Rouhani’s election, most media and diplomatic attention has focused on the development of international negotiations relating to Iran’s nuclear programme and their

progress. As yet, it still remains uncertain whether, and to what extent, the Rouhani presidency will see a significant reduction in tension and relaxation of the international trade, financial and other sanctions that have impacted Iran's economy, reduced living standards and Iranians' access to imported goods. Important though these issues are, however, they should not overshadow other problems that President Rouhani must confront if his government is to overcome the legacy of social, political and economic malaise under President Ahmadinejad and address the aspirations of its burgeoning population, more than half of which is aged under 24, with more than one quarter aged under 15.² One of the most pressing of these challenges is to be found in Iran's universities and other institutions of higher education, including medical schools, institutes of technology and community colleges. These institutions have a student population that numbers several million annually, with women reportedly comprising around half or a little more than half, yet the higher education sector no longer enjoys any meaningful degree of academic freedom. Under President Ahmadinejad, any role that the universities had managed to retain as centres of independent thought and critical analysis, or to re-establish after the so-called Cultural Revolution of the early 1980s, was all but eviscerated as the authorities took measures to bring them under closer state control, particularly by the state security and intelligence apparatus.

This process began soon after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was first elected President in 2005. He embarked on a new surge of "Islamicization" of the universities, in which courses deemed "western-influenced" were expunged from the curriculum, academic staff considered "secular" were dismissed or forced to retire, and student activists were expelled or suspended. At the same time, the authorities intensified gender segregation on campuses and tightened enforcement of dress and disciplinary codes for both students and teaching staff. This process then accelerated and intensified in the wake of the mass peaceful protests that punctuated the second half of 2009 when millions of Iranians took to the streets of Tehran and other cities to protest against President Ahmadinejad's disputed re-election in June 2009.

During the protests, in which many students and academic staff participated, the universities emerged as focal points of unrest and opposition to the re-elected President and his backers within the conservative clerical and political hierarchy, including the Supreme Leader. Clearly taken aback and unnerved by the magnitude of the protests, the authorities launched a brutal crackdown³ of several months' duration. Spearheaded by the Revolutionary Guards and the Basij, a paramilitary force, this succeeded in crushing the unrest through the application of a range of repressive measures, including unnecessary and excessive force; widespread arbitrary arrests and detentions; beatings, torture and other ill-treatment of detainees, several of whom died in custody, and a succession of grossly unfair "show trials" in which defendants were paraded before Revolutionary Courts before being sentenced to often lengthy prison terms. The trials were mostly held behind closed doors except for brief, televised sessions in which dozens of defendants, many of whom had been held incommunicado in extremely coercive conditions, were seen in humiliating conditions "confessing" to threatening national security and pleading for forgiveness. Scores received jail terms; some were released later before completing the full prison terms handed down in court. Some of the university academics and students and teaching staff had been among those who joined the protests against President Ahmadinejad's re-election. Some had openly associated themselves with the principal "opposition" presidential candidates, Mehdi

Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, or joined their election campaign teams, and so were particularly targeted in the security clampdown. Others were detained during protests or while making their way to or from demonstrations.

Security forces also raided university precincts and student dormitories; allegedly causing the deaths of up to five students, and the authorities banned scores of student publications and student groups; these included the Office for the Consolidation of Unity (OCU), Iran's largest student organization, which had branches in universities. Prior to its suppression, the OCU had spoken out to demand human rights and other reforms and urged the authorities to show greater respect for the country's Islamic Student Associations (ISA).

Many students were released uncharged after the chastening experience of detention; some, however, were then barred temporarily or permanently from returning to their university studies. Others were charged with public order offences, or accused of committing more serious, often vaguely worded and broadly defined crimes, such as "spreading lies in order to disturb the public opinion", "acting against national security by participating in illegal gatherings", "insulting the Supreme Leader", or "insulting the President". Some were accused of committing "*moharebeh*" (enmity against God), a capital offence. Those facing charges were tried before Revolutionary Courts, where they did not receive fair trials, and were sentenced to prison terms and, in some cases, flogging, when convicted.

Amid this new wave of persecution, thousands of students and academics left Iran, adding to the exodus of intellectual talent that has been a recurrent by-product of state repression under the Islamic Republic. Those who remained and were able to resume their higher education, returned to universities over which the authorities now assumed much closer control and imposed stricter surveillance and disciplinary regimes designed to root out and suppress any expression of dissent.

Before 2005, universities had a degree of autonomy in appointing their own deans and academic staff but the first Minister of Science appointed by President Ahmadinejad withdrew these powers from state universities and took them under the direct control of his Ministry; henceforth, the Ministry was able to ensure that not only senior level administrative positions but even junior teaching posts in the universities were made according to its own criteria, including criteria other than academic merit, such as membership of the Basij or experience within the Iranian military. With state security officials also now effectively ruling the roost, university authorities moved to chill dissent, using a system of "starring" to put student activists, and those who failed to adhere to strict dress and behaviour codes, on notice that they had were under official suspicion and under threat of disciplinary penalties, including suspension or expulsion or worse, if they should be seen to continue their perceived transgression.

The renewed "Islamicization" process initiated under President Ahmadinejad had a gender-specific impact and came about as the number of women and girls attending university and other centres of higher education in Iran had outstripped the number of male university students. The gender segregation of campuses imposed during the Cultural Revolution of the early 1980s, which appears to have led some families to see universities as safe places for their daughters to attend, combined with the later lifting of certain restrictions on the courses available to women, contributed to a steady rise in the number of female students in higher

education.

Women comprise around half, or slightly more than half, of all Iranian students in higher education. The “Islamicization” of the universities during the Cultural Revolution had many negative aspects and consequences but, somewhat ironically, the strict gender segregation of campuses that resulted from it appears to have had a positive impact in leading many families to conclude that the universities were places to which it was safe to send their daughters.

The number of women entering higher education increased progressively during the 1980s after the authorities decided to lift partially the restrictions imposed following the 1979 Islamic Revolution on women’s access to some courses. The steady rise in the number of women in higher education continued throughout the 1990s and into the first decade of the 21st century. By the academic year 2005-2006, the first under President Ahmadinejad, women were reported to comprise more than 55 per cent of the total number of students in higher education.⁴ In 2007, women were reported to comprise nearly 58 per cent of all students at universities and or other institutions of higher education in Iran.⁵

Official efforts to reduce the number and proportion of female students in higher education and restore the balance in favour of men began to be implemented after President Ahmadinejad took office in 2005, although the degree to which they succeeded remains open to question. The measures included quotas which some universities imposed to limit the number of female students who could enrol on specific degree courses while other courses, such as mining engineering, which the authorities perceived as suitable only for men, were closed to female students. As well, courses such as women’s studies were reformulated away from any focus on women’s rights under international law in order to give priority attention to women’s “traditional” roles and responsibilities within the family as wives and mothers, and to emphasize “Islamic values” as the key factor determining the position of women in Iranian society, and their rules of behaviour.

Female students have told Amnesty International that, in their view, the university authorities’ stricter enforcement of dress and conduct codes, coupled with the curriculum changes and quotas limiting female enrolment in particular courses, had a disproportionate, adverse impact on women and may have deterred some girls from pursuing higher education.

Members of minority religions unrecognized by Iran’s Constitution such as Baha’is, have been largely excluded from universities since shortly after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and thereby, in many cases, denied access to higher education. To Amnesty International’s knowledge, the Iranian authorities have never openly acknowledged such discrimination, which contravenes international law and human right treaties to which Iran is party, or sought to justify or explain it. According to unofficial sources, such discrimination is maintained under classified official guidelines.

What is clear, however, is that the exclusion of Baha’is and member of certain other religious minorities fits with the broader pattern of official discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities that are considered “un-Islamic” or of uncertain loyalty to the authorities, who deny them access to jobs in government service, freedom to exercise their religious beliefs or, in the case of ethnic minorities, use their own language as a medium of instruction in

schools.

Against this background, the period since President Rouhani took office has seen some, albeit limited positive developments. In particular, following the appointment of Ja'far Tofighi as interim Minister of Science, the Ministry allowed some banned students and academics to return to higher education, although they had to give written undertakings as to their future conduct and activities. In September 2013, the interim Minister announced that his Ministry had established a working group that would investigate complaints from banned students and academic staff,⁶ to which he invited recently banned students to submit complaints, and said those whose complaints were upheld would be allowed to resume their studies. He said that students who had been banned before 2011 should re-take the annual university exam if they wished to return to higher education.

As yet, it is not possible to determine the impact of these measures, although the Ministry of Science said in August 2013 that 126 formerly banned students had been allowed to resume their studies.⁷ For hundreds of others, however, there appears to have been no change, and they remain barred from university either because of their peaceful exercise of freedom of expression or the rights to peaceful assembly and association, or because they are Baha'is or members of other officially unrecognized religious groups who continue to face discrimination.

President Rouhani's first months in office have raised hopes of a less repressive system in Iran and greater government respect both for the human rights of Iran's people and for its obligations under international human rights law. The next months and years will be crucial to whether Iran's universities will be liberated from arbitrary interference by the security police and their political masters and be given the opportunity to become centres of independent scholarship, free thinking and innovation. Many in Iran and from around the world will be watching to see if President Rouhani seeks to address this crisis in Iranian higher education, as his pre-election oratory as an advocate of reform suggested he may, and if so with what degree of energy, resolution and ultimate success.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS CALLING ON THE IRANIAN AUTHORITIES TO:

- Ensure that access to higher education is made equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity and uphold the right to study, work and teach in higher education without discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, religious or other consciously held beliefs, or any other status;
- Annul all previous arbitrary suspensions and expulsions of students and all forced retirements or effective dismissals of academic staff carried out on prohibited grounds, and allow these individuals to return to their former places of study or work ;
- Ensure that students and academics who exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly do not face reprisals; and guarantee these rights by allowing students to form independent student bodies and publish journals;
- Stop arbitrary interference in the right to privacy of students and academics and ensure

that no one is denied access to higher education as punishment for their political or social opinion, religious faith, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation;

- Rescind all policies that have the intention or effect of limiting women's access to, or exclusion from higher education, including policies restricting or denying women access to particular courses of study;
- Ensure that universities and other institutions of higher education adhere to human rights standards by respecting students and academics' right to exercise freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly;
- End human rights violations in the criminal justice system, including arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detention, denial of access to lawyers, torture and other ill-treatment, and unfair trials.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is based on research that Amnesty International conducted using a wide range of private and public sources. This included in-depth interviews with more than 50 individuals, both women and men, with direct knowledge of Iran's universities and system of higher education, including former students and academic teaching staff. Amnesty International has not been permitted to visit Iran for fact-finding and research on the country since shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and thus was unable to investigate conditions at Iran's universities first hand. However, its interviewees included students and teaching staff who had recently attended or been employed at Iranian universities before fleeing Iran and seeking asylum in Turkey and other countries.

In addition to the interviews, almost all of which were conducted in Persian, Amnesty International compiled further information using questionnaires.

Among public sources, Amnesty International has drawn on information published by the Iranian government, including in submissions to the UN; reports and findings of UN bodies; statements made by Iranian officials; reports of independent non-governmental human rights organizations; and Iranian and international media reports.

Amnesty International also sought information directly from the Iranian authorities, notably concerning the number of students and academics banned from the country's universities and other centres of higher education; including how many have had their bannings set aside since President Rouhani assumed office in August 2013. To date, however, the authorities have failed to respond to Amnesty International.

Amnesty International gratefully acknowledges the assistance that it has received from many Iranians and other individuals in compiling this report, which it dedicates to those working to uphold human rights and to promote academic freedom in Iran.

2. BACKGROUND

**"[following Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election]
There was a specific campaign in process to
repress the student movement."**

Sajad Veismoradi, student activist at Amir Kabir University, spoke to Amnesty International in April 2013.

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the Iranian authorities have pursued policies aimed at the "Islamicization" of the country's higher education system based on the tenets of Shi'a Islam espoused by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and his successor as Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. In doing so, the authorities have shown little or no regard for academic freedom and the human rights on which it depends, freedom of expression and association. Rather, they have sought to force the universities and other centres of higher education into a religiously-framed straitjacket that allows little space for independent thought or free expression, particularly expressions of dissent against the ruling order and centres of state power.

Under President Ahmadinejad, following new student protests under his predecessor, the reformist President Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), the authorities again sought to tighten their grip over the universities. They reduced the powers of university principals by taking over responsibility for the appointment of university officials and academic staff, imposed a tougher disciplinary regime for both students and academics, and increased the on-campus powers of the state's security and intelligence forces. Then, in response to the mass protests against President Ahmadinejad's re-election in 2009, they launched a major crackdown whose implications are still being felt today.

THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION TO THE ELECTION OF MOHAMMAD KHATAMI, 1979-1997

Students have been a dynamic force in Iranian politics since long before the days of the 1979 Islamic Revolution; as a result, student groups and associations have often been viewed with suspicion and hostility by the country's political and security authorities.⁸

Iranian national Student Day, 7 December, remains a key date in the Iranian political calendar. It commemorates an incident in 1953 when the police, under Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran, killed three University of Tehran students during a protest against his decision to restore diplomatic relations with the USA and the UK, states that had orchestrated the overthrow of a previous Iranian government, and a visit to Tehran by then US Vice President Richard Nixon. Since the ousting of the Shah in the Islamic Revolution of 1979, 7 December has frequently been used by the authorities to demonstrate their support

within the student community and by student groups as an occasion to publicly air their grievances.⁹

Students played a major part in toppling the Shah's autocratic, Western-backed government, and in assisting Ayatollah Khomeini to establish and consolidate a new Islamic Republic with himself as Supreme Leader. In November 1979, it was student¹⁰ activists loyal to Ayatollah Khomeini who broke into and seized control of the US embassy in Tehran, sparking the fall of the post-revolutionary provisional government and the start of the 444-day US hostage crisis. Prior to the Revolution, leftist, nationalist and religious-based political parties had all established their own student groups. These included the Muslim Students' Society,¹¹ which was affiliated to the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI)¹² and developed a large following enabling it to win elections in 1979 to control many universities' Student Coordination Councils. The period of political convulsion immediately following the Shah's overthrow saw an easing of the restrictions on free speech and the rights to freedom of assembly and association that his secret police had so brutally enforced, but this was short lived. Amid the political ferment that the Revolution spawned, student organizations rapidly became partisans in an increasingly bitter power struggle between secularist and leftist political parties and the religious-based groups that lined up behind Ayatollah Khomeini and the powerful clerics who supported him. In September 1979, after meeting Ayatollah Khomeini, students at the University of Tehran¹³ formed the Union of Islamic Students Associations of Universities Nationwide-Office for the Consolidation of Unity (ISA-OCU), as an umbrella organization linking Islamic Students' Associations (ISA) from around the country,¹⁴ which, backed by the new government, soon assumed pre-eminence within the national student movement.

As they consolidated their power, the new authorities of the Islamic Republic targeted secular and leftist political organizations, including their student support groups, weakening and drastically reducing the latter's presence and influence on the country's campuses. Ayatollah Khomeini then capitalized on the ascendancy of the ISAs by launching the Cultural Revolution with their active support. He did this in a speech in April 1980 in which he singled out the University of Tehran, Iran's most prestigious university, for special criticism for its alleged secularism and Western orientation. He demanded that the university "be Islamized" in order to ensure that the knowledge gained within its walls should be used to benefit Iran, and to "gain its independence from the West and the East." His speech, as expected, had immediate impact. The next day, the government announced that all of Iran's universities would be closed down once the forthcoming end of year exams, only weeks away, had been completed, and that the period of closure would be used to fundamentally reform them on the basis of the Islamic principles espoused by Ayatollah Khomeini and other Shi'a clerics.

With the closure of the universities and other institutions of higher education, a seven member Cultural Revolution Headquarters¹⁵ was appointed to lead and oversee the reform process and ensure its compatibility with Islamic tenets. This was replaced in 1984 by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (SCCR)¹⁶ a larger body that continues today to wield great influence and direct official policy on higher education although it has no statutory powers under the law.

The re-opening of the universities following their enforced closure and "reform" was

accompanied by a significant drop in student numbers – down from 174,217 in academic year 1979-80, immediately preceding the shutdown, to 117,148 in 1982-83, the first academic year after they reopened.

By the end of the Cultural Revolution, the authorities had effectively broken the power of secular and leftist organizations, including their student wings. They had re-asserted state control over the student movement as a whole and secured its loyalty and subservience to the government and, particularly, to Ayatollah Khomeini, as it remained until his death in 1989. This included the period of the Iran-Iraq War (September 1980 – August 1988) during which thousands of students volunteered for military service; many were killed or sustained serious injuries while fighting against the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussain's armed forces.

The challenges of post-war reconstruction once peace was agreed with Iraq and other factors ensured that it was only when a new generation of students who had grown up under the Islamic Republic emerged in the 1990s that students' organizations again began to assume significance in national politics and to present a challenge to the authorities. By then, the ISA-OCU had lost some of its influence. Virtually moribund, it had splintered into different factions aligned broadly to the main tendencies – conservative and reformist - that had emerged within Iran's ruling politico-clerical elite. Many of the new generation of student activists were attracted to the views espoused by the reformists, who included former leaders of Islamic student organizations who had emerged as advocates of greater, albeit limited, political and social liberalization since rising to senior positions within the administration or wider political establishment.

MOHAMMAD KHATAMI'S ERA, 1997- 2005

The shift towards limited liberalization was reflected by the OCU's decision to support the reformist cleric Mohammad Khatami in his successful campaign for the Presidency in 1997. Yet, despite his reformist credentials, President Khatami's first years in office witnessed a steady rise in tension between the ruling authorities and their critics within the student movement. This came to a head in July 1999 when the authorities ordered the closure of *Salam*, a reformist newspaper whose editors included former student leaders. In response, students at the University of Tehran staged a peaceful protest, but this led to a brutal government crackdown during which riot police, assisted by paramilitaries, carried out a violent raid on the university's student dormitories, killing at least one student and wounding others. This violence sparked further student protests, which the authorities crushed by arresting and detaining hundreds of student activists, some of whom were tortured. Many were charged with state security or public order offences and sentenced to prison terms after they were convicted following unfair trials.¹⁷

Four years later, during President Khatami's second term of office, Iran's campuses saw renewed unrest after rumours in June 2003 that the government planned to privatize universities and raise tuition costs. Once again, the authorities' response to the protests was brutal and uncompromising. The security forces quelled the protests using a combination of excessive force, including violent attacks on student dormitories, mass arrests and rough treatment of protestors – at Evin Prison in Tehran, members of the Revolutionary Guards were alleged to have sexually abused detained female students.

Yet further divisions emerged within the student movement in 2004, reflecting the

continuing struggle for political ascendancy between political conservatives and reformists. On one side,¹⁸ the dominant faction within the OCU openly proclaimed itself an advocate of international human rights, calling on the government to adhere to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; on the other, the ISA at the University of Tehran announced that it had suspended seven of its own branches in various faculties because of what it considered their overly secular orientation.

By the end of President Khatami's second term of office in 2005, the student movement had largely atomized into a web of groups and associations espousing different viewpoints. Some produced campus-based journals to advertise their existence and promote their views, reflecting the more relaxed atmosphere that then existed across the country's campuses after some easing of restrictions by the Khatami administration.

All this was to change, however, when a new President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, replaced President Khatami in 2005 after sweeping to power in an election in which he roundly defeated both of his two main reformist opponents, Mostafa Mo'in and Mehdi Karroubi, and former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.¹⁹

3. HIGHER EDUCATION IN IRAN

"Public premises such as libraries, dormitories, and canteens must be separate for male and female students or they must be used at different times [by either men or women]"

Article 11 of the Resolution 121 of the Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution.

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran imposes on the government "the duty of directing all its resources" to the pursuit of certain goals, among which is the provision of "Free education and physical training for everyone at all levels, and the facilitation and expansion of higher education."²⁰ Article 30 contains a reference to free higher education: "The Government is bound to make available, free of charge, educational facilities for all up to the close of the secondary stage, and to expand free facilities for higher education to achieve self-sufficiency for the country."

Article 20 provides for the equal enjoyment of all rights by all individuals "in compliance with Islam's criteria." This phrase, however, is not defined in the Constitution or in any other law; in practice, the authorities use it to justify official discrimination against minorities in contravention of Iran's obligations as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). These key international human rights treaties both prohibit all discrimination on grounds including race, sex, language or religion, national or social origin, and political or other opinion.

ADMINISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

All legislation relating to education at all levels is directed by the SCCR, which replaced the Cultural Revolution Headquarters in December 1984 and took over its role of supervising the universities and the nature and content of the education they provide.²¹ Based in Tehran, the SCCR comprises 40 members, some whom are appointed by the Supreme Leader. It does not have formal legislative powers but its decisions are treated by the Iranian authorities as if they have the force of law. In February 1985, Ayatollah Khomeini declared that the SCCR's resolutions were to be considered binding. The SCCR itself re-affirmed this in a resolution it adopted in October 1997, which asserted that SCCR resolutions have the force of law and are binding.²²

Iran's President is the *ex officio* chair of the SCCR; other *ex officio* members include, the Head of the Judiciary, the speaker of parliament, the Minister of Science, Research and

Technology, the Minister of Education, Culture and Guidance, and the Minister of Health and Medical Education. Following his election in 2005, President Ahmadinejad began chairing SCCR meetings, enabling him to influence its deliberations, direction and directives. President Rouhani replaced his predecessor as chair of the SCCR after assuming office in August 2013, but it is as yet unclear what impact, if any, this has had on SCCR decision-making.

Over the years, the SCCR has proved to be a highly conservative body. It has mandated many curriculum changes as part of its efforts to bring education and teaching into conformity with what it considers to be authentic Islamic principles, content and belief. In the mid-1980s, for example, it directed that courses on Logic and Economics should no longer be included in the general or compulsory curricula and that all undergraduates should study and achieve credits in the History of Islam, Islamic Upbringing and Ethics, and Islamic Texts.²³ In 2004, the SCCR directed that undergraduates should be required to study 12 units of Islamic Culture, including units in Islamic Thought, Islamic Ethics, Islamic Revolution (including Ayatollah Khomeini's Political Thought), as well as Islamic History and Civilization.²⁴

In 1998, the SCCR approved a set of "Principles Governing the Islamic University"; these declare that "monotheistic insight", "spirituality" and "ethics" should guide all aspects of universities.²⁵ Two years later, after major student demonstrations in 1999, "the Council for Islamization of the Universities and Educational Centers",²⁶ which the SCCR had established, approved a set of "Strategic Policies for Islamicization of Educational Centres" based on SCCR-prescribed principles. "Action plans" developed alongside these Strategic Policies called for the promotion of "Islamic faith and belief among students" in higher education and the recruitment and selection by universities of "merited and pious professors" who adhered to the "fundamentals and ideals" of the Islamic Republic, as a means to ensure that universities conformed to the SCCR's Principles Governing the Islamic University. The Strategic Policies also called for "maintaining *efaf* [chastity] in educational centres"; in order to achieve this, authorities were instructed to regulate relations between female and male students so as to prevent or reduce "mingling" between the sexes, to review existing educational curricula and to devise textbooks based on Islam and its fundamental belief and tenets, particularly for students pursuing courses in the humanities.²⁷

Iran's higher education sector comprises four types of institution: universities (including state-run, private and distance learning), teacher training colleges, higher education institutes, and technical institutes. The Ministry of Science (formerly the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education) oversees the country's more than 50 state-run universities, while over 40 state-run medical schools are administered under the control of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

In 2008, there were reported to be some 1.8 million students attending these state-run institutions, with a further 1.5 million students enrolled at Islamic Azad University, a private university founded in 1982 with the backing of the current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, and other leading clerics and politicians. Based in Tehran, Islamic Azad University has hundreds of branches across Iran and some abroad. It is affiliated to the SCCR and its qualifications are recognized by the Ministry of Science. Formally independent and autonomous from the state-run system of higher education, Islamic Azad University came under effective government control during the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In

2011, the government made senior appointments to the university, increasing its ties with the authorities.

Payam-e Noor University, founded in 1986 under the auspices of the SCCR, has its headquarters in Tehran but operates many regional study centres. It is controlled by the Ministry of Science and provides distance learning for around one million higher education students.

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

Students are admitted to university once they have passed the annual entrance examination, either that required for entry to one of the state-run universities or medical schools or that required for entry to Islamic Azad University. The total number of students in higher education is difficult to gauge accurately, but they number in the millions. According to one senior government source, there were some 4,460,000 students in higher education in the 2011-2012 academic year, of whom 1,576,000 were attending Islamic Azad University.²⁸

The same source said there were more than 66,000 academic staff then employed, not including those employed by “executive bodies”; of these 66,000 academics, more than 30,000 were employed by Islamic Azad University, over 18,000 others were employed by the Ministry of Science, and more than 12,000 were employed by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education. The remainder were employed by Payam-e Noor University and private institutions.²⁹

In 1985, the SCCR established criteria relating to the admission of students to higher education; these require aspiring students to “be faithful to Islam” or to “another divine religion” – that is, one of the three other officially-recognized religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism). These criteria automatically exclude adherents of faiths not recognized under Iran’s Constitution, notably Baha’is. The criteria also require that university entrants must not have fought against the Islamic Republic of Iran “by political or military means” and “must not be known for immorality.” The SCCR made the Ministry of Education, which has responsibility for primary and secondary schools, the Prosecutor’s Office, the Ministry of Intelligence, and the Centre for Investigation of Documents of Entrance Examinations in Previous Years, responsible for conducting background checks to ascertain whether individual students seeking admission to higher education meet these criteria.³⁰

The SCCR criteria give students applying for entry to postgraduate study or medical internships priority over others if they are judged to be “faithful” to Islam, the Islamic Republic and the Iranian Constitution, and the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih* [Ayatollah Khomeini’s political concept of rule by a religious scholar or scholars, which is the basis of political leadership in Iran], or if they have a record of supporting the Revolution before 1979 or during the military defence of the country during the Iran-Iraq war.³¹

RULES AND DISCIPLINE

Over the years, the SCCR has issued a series of resolutions setting down rules relating to the attitudes, behaviour, dress, morals and beliefs of both academic staff and students in higher education, reinforced by a system of disciplinary control and punishment overseen by campus-based security units linked directly to the Ministry of Intelligence.

In 1985, the SCCR issued a resolution that required all candidates for academic staff positions to be loyal to the Islamic Republic and the Constitution, free from any record of “effective activity in support of the former government” of the Shah, not to be *mohareb* (enemy of God) or support “hostile splinter groups,” and to be untainted by “debauchery” or “immoral acts and behaviour.”³² As well, those seeking academic appointments were required to have “demonstrated practical allegiance to Islamic decrees” unless they belonged to religious minorities recognized under the Constitution and had not publicly breached Islamic decrees.

In a 1987 resolution, the SCCR set out the rules for segregating women and men on campus, which had already been in force effectively at least since the universities reopened after the Cultural Revolution. They also prescribed how women should dress. The SCCR rules required virtually total separation of male and female students – they were required to sit separately; attend separate classes, where possible; use separate laboratories, workshops, computer rooms, libraries, reading rooms, and other facilities, eat in separate canteens and use separate dormitories and sport centres. In the hospitals attached to medical schools, male and female wards were to be kept separate, and male and female students were not to “mingle” in operating theatres. There were to be separate corridors and noticeboards to keep the sexes apart, and male staff were to employ only male secretaries. Female students and other women on campus were to wear Islamic dress and “avoid tight and gaudy dresses, makeup and overdressing” while male students and other men present were ordered not to wear “gaudy clothes.”³³

Almost two decades later, as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was about to become President in 2005, the SCCR issued its Strategies to Promote the Culture of Modesty and Chastity, a set of 46 principles that, among other things, sought to promote adherence to use of the *hejab* in particular to encourage the use of the *chador* (full-body robe), and to promote the development and use of other clothing that could be considered distinctly Islamic and Iranian.³⁴

Having set out its Strategies, the SCCR established a Committee for Promotion of the Culture of Virtue to implement them. This powerful body brought together representatives from 26 other ministries and organizations under the leadership of the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, with the director of the Islamic Propaganda Organization acting as his deputy. It was tasked with developing implementation plans to put the “Modesty and Chastity” strategies into effect. To date, little information has emerged about the Committee’s work although in 2011 it was reported to have complained of a “lack of serious determination” among government ministries and state organizations in promoting the *hejab*.³⁵

In January 2006, the Public Culture Council of Iran, which operates under the auspices of the SCCR, published a set of Policies and Executive Mechanisms for Promotion of the Culture of Virtue and Hejab.³⁶ These laid out detailed instructions on the wearing of the *hejab* and other symbols of “virtue” by women for application by government ministries, the judiciary, the police, the parliament, municipal authorities, radio and television broadcasters and others.

MECHANISMS OF REPRESSION

Students face restrictions and abuse from many quarters, though most actors implementing repressive measures are either officially or unofficially linked to the state.

In accordance with resolutions of the SCCR, all universities and other institutions of higher education have Disciplinary Committees³⁷ whose task it is to ensure observance by the student body of rules laid down by the SCCR relating to gender segregation, dress, behaviour, devotion to Islamic principles, and other matters, and to impose punishments on those students who are deemed to have contravened any of these rules. Apart from common offences such as theft or forgery, students face penalties if they are judged to support groups that the authorities consider atheist or *mohareb*, if they are held to have insulted Islamic teachings or opposed the state, or if they fail to comply with the Islamic dress code, engage in “illicit relations” or commit “immoral acts.”³⁸ Students suspected or accused on these grounds are often likely to be arrested and detained by state security authorities but also face punishment by their university or other institution’s Disciplinary Committee, which may impose a variety of sanctions. These range from oral or written reprimands up to penalties that, when approved by the Central Disciplinary Committee of the Ministry of Science, include temporary bans for up to four semesters, and full expulsion and banning from any university or other institution of higher education for up to five years. In such cases, the decision of the Central Disciplinary Committee is final, according to a SCCR resolution that prevents students turning to the courts to appeal against the sanctions that the Disciplinary Committee has imposed upon them.³⁹

Each university also has a Security Department (*Herasat*), which reports to the Ministry of Intelligence, whose role it is to monitor the student body and academic teaching staff and enforce rules and discipline. Students wishing to organize groups or activities on campus must first obtain a permit to do so from the Security Department. The Supreme Leader also exercises direct power through the appointment of a Supreme Leader’s Representative, who has an influential position in relation to the management of universities, including in the appointment or dismissal of deans of schools or departments.

The Students’ Basij, students who are members of the Basij, a largely unaccountable paramilitary force that operates under the command of the Revolutionary Guards, are also present on university campuses, where they act as an additional arm of state repression and have often attacked or clashed with other students. Many students allege that university authorities admit members of the Basij as students preferentially and without their being required to sit the common university entrance examinations.

4. DISCRIMINATION BASED ON GENDER AND RELIGION

“When I went to the Office of the Public Relations of the Parliament to submit my letter [of complaint], the man who was sitting there put his finger on the word Baha’i in my letter and said, ‘This is your problem’. He was even scared to read the word aloud.”

Baha’i student Interviewed on 10 April 2013 via Skype, name withheld at his request to protect his security.

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality⁴⁰, discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnicity and religion is widespread in Iran. Members of minority groups are subject to discriminatory laws and practices, including restricted access to basic amenities such as housing, water and sanitation, land and property confiscation, denial of state employment under discriminatory criteria, and restrictions on their economic, social, cultural, and linguistic rights.

Ethnic minorities, such as Arabs, Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, and Kurds, who have actively sought greater recognition of their cultural and political rights, have long faced state repression. Activities of members of these groups are frequently regarded with suspicion by the Iranian authorities, who often accuse them of threatening state security and prosecute them on charges such as membership of armed opposition groups.⁴¹ Most provinces with large ethnic minority populations, such as Sistan-Baluchistan, are located in border areas and are some of Iran’s poorest and most deprived areas. They generally have low levels of adult literacy and primary school enrolment and, consequently, little access to higher education. Alongside such pervasive discrimination against ethnic minorities, the Iranian authorities have systematically restricted access to university education on grounds of gender and religion.

DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF GENDER

From 1989 through to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s election as President in 2005, there was a striking increase in the number of women and girls entering higher education in Iran. On its face, this was the more remarkable in view of the continuing high level of discrimination against women and girls both under the law and in practice. Even today, women are absent

from virtually all senior decision-making positions of the state, both within the executive and the judiciary, and only nine women hold seats in the 230 member legislature, the parliament.⁴² Moreover, no woman has ever been appointed or elected to the Council of Guardians, a powerful 12-member body⁴³ whose principal roles are to interpret the Constitution, ensure that laws approved by the parliament are compatible with the Constitution and Islamic law, and to approve or veto proposed candidates for presidential and other elections. Nor has the Expediency Council, which was created by Ayatollah Khomeini to resolve disputes between the Council of Guardians and the parliament, ever had included any women among its members. Nor has a woman ever been permitted to stand as a candidate in Iran's presidential elections.

Women also face severe discrimination under the law. The Civil Code denies them equal rights with men in relation to the family, including with respect to marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance. The revised Penal Code, which was signed by President Ahmadinejad into law as his second term of office came towards its close in 2013, likewise relegates women to a subordinate status relative to men. For example, it instructs the courts to value the testimony of a woman at half that of a man in legal proceedings and sets the amount of 'blood' value to be paid as recompense for criminally causing the death of a woman at half that payable for causing the death of a man. The Penal Code sets the age of criminal responsibility for girls at nine lunar years [8.7 solar years], whereas boys become liable for criminal prosecution at age 15 lunar years [14.6 solar years]. The Code fails to criminalize marital rape, as unhampered sexual access is considered to be a husband's right under Iranian law. Consensual sexual relations outside marriage remains punishable; adultery while married carries a sentence of death by stoning, a penalty that appears to be disproportionately imposed on women.

Initially, the Cultural Revolution impeded women's access to higher education. The Cultural Revolution Headquarters imposed "restrictions and bans" that caused a fall in the number of female students in higher education,⁴⁴ denying them "the right to enter 91 courses from a total of 169 courses, most of which were technology and engineering courses."⁴⁵ There were also new limits on the number of women allowed to study agricultural, veterinary and science courses, reducing "their share to 10-20 per cent."⁴⁶

In 1989, however, the SCCR resolved to lift some of the restrictions on women's access to certain courses.⁴⁷ It also established a quota system under which female students were allowed to comprise up to 20 per cent of students admitted to study laboratory sciences, environmental hygiene and pharmacology, from which they had previously been barred. At the same time, other quotas that had limited the number of female students admitted to nursing, dentistry and midwifery courses were scrapped. In addition, the SCCR decided that female students should be admitted to: all teacher training courses other than those relating to technical subjects; all science courses except for geology; and all arts and humanities courses except for law, theology and Islamic knowledge. Fifteen per cent of places on doctoral courses in veterinary science were allocated for female students.⁴⁸

By the time of these changes, the number of female students as a proportion of all students in higher education was already rising again after the fall that followed the Cultural Revolution. The upward curve then continued into the first decade of the 21st century. In 1986, only 29.2 per cent of higher education students were female, but by 1996 this had

risen to 36 per cent⁴⁹ and, six years later in 2002, female students comprised over 50 per cent of the whole.⁵⁰ The proportion continued to rise, reaching a high of nearly 59 per cent in 2007⁵¹ before dropping back to 51 per cent in 2008.⁵² As this rise in the overall number and proportion of female students became apparent, it was increasingly called into question by influential religious and political leaders who deemed it “contrary to women’s roles as mothers and wives”.⁵³ Some suggested that it was contributing to what they saw as a worryingly negative trend in the national birth rate; others pointed out that, after graduating from university, many women married and settled down to family life rather than utilising their educational qualifications and the knowledge they had gained at university in seeking employment. Still others blamed the high rate of male unemployment at least partly on the number of female students and graduates who specialized in fields “suitable for men”.⁵⁴ Although the first steps aimed at reducing the number of female students entering university were taken in the last years of President Khatami’s administration, the main thrust in this regard began once President Ahmadinejad was elected in 2005. The authorities then introduced a series of measures apparently intended to deter many girls from entering higher education and so to reduce the number of female students as a proportion of the total student intake.

These measures included new rules on, and stricter enforcement of, gender segregation on campus, and a gender-based quota system that served either to exclude female students altogether from certain university degree courses, which were reserved for male students, or to cap the number of female students allowed entry to a particular study course. This process intensified as the Ahmadinejad presidency wore on and conservative clerics and others within the ruling establishment reacted against the growing demands for equality and an end to gender-based discrimination made by Iranian women’s rights campaigners, many of them university students or graduates, and the support from abroad that the international women’s movement afforded them.

The participation of many women in the mass protests against President Ahmadinejad’s re-election in 2009 almost certainly produced a sense of profound shock among Iran’s ageing, conservative and exclusively male clerical elite, and their powerful allies within the state security and intelligence forces. It is likely also that television images showing women participating actively and openly alongside men in the mass protests that toppled the longstanding highly autocratic governments of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Zine el Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia during the uprisings of 2011 will have exacerbated their concern⁵⁵ and given new impetus to the authorities’ pursuit of measures aimed at keeping women in their homes and adhering to “traditional” roles as wives, mothers and the bearers of children.

Reflecting this, the then Minister of Science Kamran Daneshjoo, responsible for Iran’s state-run universities, said in November 2012 that the authorities were imposing stricter gender segregation policies on university campuses in accordance with the rulings of “15 religious leaders” who had issued *fatwas* declaring that “mingling” between men and women was “not permissible” under Islamic law.⁵⁶

LIMITING WOMEN’S ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Efforts to reduce the proportion of female students in higher education were already being considered during President Khatami’s administration. In April 2003, Hassan Rahimi, the head of the Education Assessment Organization, said that a 50 per cent entry limit would be

placed on the number of female university entrants accepted to study certain subjects, including mining engineering, agriculture and medicine.⁵⁷ This had been proposed by conservative members, who were then a minority within the parliament. In the event, the limit was dropped by order of President Khatami after he received a letter signed by 158 other members of parliament who opposed the gender quota.⁵⁸

Following parliamentary elections in 2004, however, when conservatives won a majority of seats, and the election of President Ahmadinejad in 2005, the authorities revived the use of gender quotas as part of their efforts to reduce the number of female university students. In February 2006, after official figures revealed that female students now made up to 62 per cent of all university entrants, the head of the parliament's Education and Research Committee said that both the parliament and the SCCR were considering the introduction of gender quotas on access to higher education,⁵⁹ and the following year the parliament began considering a draft law. One of its main supporters of introduction of a gender quota within the parliament, Zadali Khalil Tahmasbi, observed:

*"As women cannot work and travel to remote cities without the permission of their fathers and husbands, their expertise is of no benefit to the country."*⁶⁰

The steady rise in the number of women entering higher education continued to cause disquiet in official circles.⁶¹ In 2008, the parliament's Research Centre published a study that reflected the authorities' concerns about the growth in the number of female students in higher education.⁶² The study alleged that this had caused serious administrative problems – such as the difficulty of providing adequate dormitory places and facilities for female students and measures to ensure their safety and well-being. As well, although the study recognized several positive social outcomes arising from women's access to higher education (including improved family welfare, more effective utilization of women's capabilities and expertise, and greater awareness of their role), it claimed the rise in female students had brought questionable social and economic consequences, including a new "gender balance" in the labour market. It also listed seven negative arguments – for example, that allowing so many women to access higher education represented a waste of national resources and opportunities, and that it had contributed to higher male unemployment, increased expectations among married women resulting in a higher divorce rate. The study suggested that the rise in the number of female students had also resulted in a rise in the average age at which women married, a diminution in women's role as mothers, and a general growth in moral corruption.

The study warned:

*"With a view to the current trend, if the increase in the presence of girls and women in the universities is not proportionate to their physical capacity and mental conditions, we shall witness the occurrence of economic, social and cultural imbalance between men and women that will surely leave destructive effects within the families."*⁶³

The study disclosed that the Education Assessment Organization, working in cooperation with the Ministries of Science and Health, had instituted a gender quota system in relation to the admission of students to 26 subjects in 2006 and to 39 subjects in 2007; ⁶⁴ official information provided to prospective students in those years, however, had made no reference to the existence of these quotas.

Adding to the complexity, the SCCR adopted a resolution in 2008 imposing “native selection”⁶⁵quotas; these limited the number of students eligible to study at universities located in cities and provinces distant from their homes. At first sight, these restrictions appeared to impact mostly on students – both male and female – living in areas outside Tehran and the other cities in which the best universities are to be found; however, they also appear to have impacted disproportionately on women and girls within these more remote areas, as the universities available to them would generally be smaller and less well equipped than those in Tehran and other cities, and offer a more limited range of degree courses for female students.

In 2011, the universities banned female students from admission to two fields of study – mining engineering and agricultural engineering (including machinery mechanics); these courses were reserved exclusively for male students.

The following year, women were barred from 77 courses in 36 universities across the country. These included courses in engineering, accounting, pure chemistry, English language and literature, political science, business administration, public administration, English translation, and archaeology.⁶⁶

Despite a lack of consistency between universities, a clear trend emerged towards limiting women's access to certain courses of study. The picture remains a mixed one, however: some universities continue to admit female students to degree courses from which they are barred by other universities. For example, the University of Tehran continued to accept female students on engineering and science degree courses in 2012 but the University of Chamran in⁶⁷ Ahvaz did not. Similarly, the International University of Imam Khomeini in Qazvin refused to admit female students to a range of courses, including law, Persian language and literature, and English translation, but female students could still gain admission to the same subject courses in both Tehran and Tabriz.⁶⁸ Most recently, in the 2013-2014 academic year the application of gender quotas continued, although it appears to have been reduced, with fewer subjects affected.⁶⁹ In March 2014, the Ministry of Health announced its plans to reduce the number of female students enrolling in medical schools. The Ministry argued that the difficulties of assigning female doctors to remote areas has affected the Ministry's abilities to provide adequate health care in these areas.⁷⁰

One factor that may lie behind the authorities' push to reduce the number of female students in higher education is the question of Iran's birth rate, which has fallen below the level advocated by the country's Supreme Leader, leading him and others to question the population control policies adopted by previous administrations. In July 2012, Ayatollah Khamenei publicly called for a doubling of Iran's population, from the 75.15 million, which it totalled at the time of the 2011 census, to between 150 and 200 million.⁷¹ In October 2012, he said that for the authorities it had been “one of our mistakes” in the mid-1990s to not to abandon the state's population control policy in the mid-1990s.⁷² In 2013, he again affirmed his ambition to see Iran's population rise to a minimum of 150 million.⁷³

In 2012, the SCCR issued its “National Strategies and Actions to Prevent the Fall in Fertility Rate and its Promotion in Proportion to Islamic Teachings and the National Strategic Requirements.”⁷⁴ This called for the development of “a life style model to promote social,

educational and employment activities of women suitable with Islamic criteria and coherent with the interests of the family for the purpose of the complete fulfilment of the role of mother and wife”, and contained policy statements on employment and women’s education. The SCCR document also called for the educational system to be more clearly geared to support optimum population growth and fertility, including through curriculum changes to provide courses that focus on the role and status of the family, and on the role of women, based on Islamic culture. As well, the SCCR called for the provision of shorter study courses for students who were already mothers, and for both these students and other married students to be receive state benefits. Following the SCCR directive, universities moved to drop courses on Population Control and Family Planning and replace them with courses on Knowledge of the Family, covering issues such as marriage, partnership, and child rearing.⁷⁵ In October 2013, Ali Sangi, the manager of the Department for Family’s Health and Iran’s Population within the Ministry of Health, announced that the Ministry was no longer providing family planning classes for married couples and that its health clinics had ceased distribution of free pregnancy prevention kits in 2012.⁷⁶

Despite the widening circle of repression and the increasing pressure on their activities over the past years, women’s human rights activists have continued to campaign for their right to education. In March 2013, 13 students and women’s rights activists submitted a complaint against the Ministry of Science, the Education Assessment Organization and 36 universities across the country to the Court of Cassation. They argued that the measures taken by the educational authorities in the 2012-2013 academic year to bar women from accessing study courses in 77 subjects at 36 universities had breached Iranian domestic laws as well as Iran’s international treaty obligations. They urged the Administrative Court of Justice to overturn these measures and order the women affected should receive reparation, noting that Article 9 of Iran’s Civil Code states that the international conventions to which Iran is party, including the ICCPR, ICESCR and the Convention against Discrimination in Education, have the force of law.⁷⁷

Representatives of the 13 women told a press conference on 16 September 2013 that their complaint did not cover student admissions for the 2013-2104 academic year because the authorities had reduced their use of gender quotas by 36 per cent. However, they said the complainants had re-submit their claim following the election of President Rouhani and the appointment of a new government in order to seek a court ruling prohibiting the future use of gender quotas or other discriminatory practices.⁷⁸ In November 2013, the Head of the Administrative Court of Justice stated that the court had yet to examine the substance of the complaint,⁷⁹ and since then no further developments have been reported.

EDUCATIONAL APARTHEID – KEEPING THE SEXES APART

In 2011, the University of Tehran and around 20 other universities began employing a single-sex admission policy for more than 40 courses that they reserved exclusively for study by either male or female students.⁸⁰ In addition, 45 universities applied measures as part of their efforts to ensure that male students outnumbered female students.⁸¹ In 2012, 60 universities imposed gender segregation in university classrooms and took further steps to discriminate in favour of the admission of male rather than female students to a wide range of courses.⁸²

Overall, however, these policies varied in their application and had a mixed effect. Thus,

while some universities admitted only male or female students to particular courses, other universities allowed a mixed intake to similar courses or allowed only a male intake at the beginning of one semester followed by an exclusively female intake in another semester.⁸³

Women's human rights activists contend that greater gender segregation has a disproportionately discriminatory impact on women and reduces their access to higher education... In practice, various factors militate against the full separation of the sexes across Iran's campuses that some religious conservatives advocate. It would require a significant increase in, or reallocation of the country's educational resources, including teaching rooms, laboratories and other facilities,⁸⁴ especially while women continue to constitute such a high proportion of students. It would also require the employment of additional teaching and other staff, and the provision of additional equipment at a time when Iran's economy continues to labour under the impact of international financial and trade sanctions enforced by the USA and other states. It would be difficult or impossible to implement effectively in particular circumstances, as former Minister of Health and Medical Education, Marzieh Vahid-Dastjerdi acknowledged. She ruled out any notion of single-sex hospitals and medical centres as places of training for medical students, declaring that accident and emergency services should be readily available to all patients in need, whatever their gender.⁸⁵

Despite this, a senior Ministry of Science official, Dr Abolfazl Hassani, announced in 2012 that permits had been issued for the establishment of "20 single-sex universities and higher education institutes" in the 2012-13 academic year, 14 of which would admit only female students and six of which would admit only male students; most were believed to be private initiatives.⁸⁶ As of March 2014, it was not known to what extent these single sex institutions were functioning, how many female students they had accepted for admission and what courses, with what content, they were providing.

The authorities have sought to show evidence of strong student support for their heightened segregation of universities by organizing opinion polls, including polls in which student respondents were required to identify themselves. One, held on 13 March 2013, was aimed at 200,000 candidates for entry to university postgraduate studies, who were asked to respond to the question "in which educational stages is it necessary to establish female-only universities with a view to customs and traditions of the Iranians?" They had to choose between four possible answers – "Undergraduate", "Postgraduate", "Doctoral", or "All three"⁸⁷ – but given no option to signal any preference for a co-educational system of higher education intended to serve males and females equally and without discrimination. Following President Rouhani's election, his nominee for Minister of Science, Reza Faraji Dana, told parliament that neither he nor the Ministry opposed single-sex universities and would base their future planning around the Islamicization of Universities Document and work towards "reducing the mingling" of sexes, as the Document requires.⁸⁸

DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RELIGIOUS BELIEF OR AFFILIATION

Throughout the period since the 1979 Revolution, the authorities have applied discriminatory practices to bar members of certain religious minorities such as Bahai's from accessing higher education in universities and other institutions and put in place restrictions that limit the enjoyment of others including Ahl-e Haq, Sufis, and Sunni Muslims of their right to education.⁸⁹ These discriminatory restrictions have clearly been sanctioned, if not instigated,

by the highest state authorities, including both the former and current Supreme Leaders.

Applicants for the Nationwide University Entrance Exam at undergraduate and postgraduate levels were formerly required to fill in application forms containing questions regarding their faith. These asked them to indicate to which of the four constitutionally recognized religions – Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism – they belonged, allowing no space for Baha'is or members of other officially unrecognized religions to declare their faith. Baha'i candidates, whose faith requires that they do not conceal or lie about their beliefs, often leave this question blank, effectively acknowledging that they are adherents of an officially unrecognized religion and so opening themselves to exclusion.

Every year, scores of Baha'i students are either prevented from starting their studies after passing the entrance exams or are expelled afterwards for refusing to formally deny or recant their allegiance to their faith.

Baha'i students were allowed to sit the first university entrance exams that were held after the 1979 Revolution and to begin their studies until these were interrupted by the closure of all universities during the Cultural Revolution. When the universities re-opened in 1982, some 700 Baha'i students were among those prevented from returning. They received expulsion orders informing them that they were barred from higher education because they had admitted to being Baha'is. From 1983 to 2004, Baha'i students were denied even the opportunity to sit the university entrance examinations.⁹⁰

“When I finished my high school [in 1995] the policy of the government for not letting the Baha'i students to even take the University Entrance Exam was clear. My brother had finished high school four years before me and had not been allowed to take the exam. He tried to follow it up but got no results. After I finished my high school, I did not even try to take the Entrance Exam because I knew that I would not even receive my exam card.”⁹¹

Pedram Roshan told Amnesty International that, as Baha'is, he and his elder brother were denied access to state-run higher education.

In 2004, following growing international criticism of the government's treatment of Baha'is, the authorities amended the entrance exam registration forms for state universities. They altered the question that previously asked applicants to declare their religious faith, replacing it with one asking which set of questions an applicant opted to answer in part of the entrance exam that tests religious knowledge. After this change, made under President Khatami, some Baha'i students obtained admission to state universities, but most were then forced out after President Ahmadinejad came to power.⁹²

One Baha'i student who was expelled from university in 2011, told Amnesty International of his surprise when authorities admitted him to a computer sciences course at Sharif University until, after he had completed two semesters, he was abruptly denied access to the university's website. He then learnt from a university admissions official that an order had come from “above” requiring him to go before the Education Assessment Organization. “I knew then that I had been expelled,” he said.⁹³

Another Baha'i student told Amnesty International⁹⁴ what happened after he sat the university entrance exam in 2005:

"When the results were announced, more than half of the Baha'i students were told that their case files were 'incomplete'. They had to go to the Education Assessment Organization... I went to the Education Assessment Organization... I was explicitly told that I could not study because I was Baha'i. After... I went to the Ministry of Science. I was told that they had received the orders from 'above'. We never knew what is the 'above'."

He sought to challenge the bar on his university entrance by appealing to the country's elected representatives, only to be turned away:

"When I went to the Office of the Public Relations of the Parliament to submit my letter [of complaint], the man who was sitting there put his finger on the word Baha'i in my letter and said, 'This is your problem'. He was even scared to read the word aloud."

In some cases, the authorities in higher education are reported to have accepted the enrolment of Baha'i students by writing "Islam" in their files to disguise their true religious identity, but have expelled students or prevented them from enrolling after they have objected. However, this has led some Baha'is to express concern that students who benefit from this concealment could become liable to possible prosecution on charges of "apostasy from Islam" if, after university, they continue to practice their Baha'i faith.

In 1991, the SCCR addressed "the Baha'i question" in a confidential document – the so-called Golpaygani Memorandum – that Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, then approved and signed. The memorandum advised the government generally to avoid using overt forms of persecution against Baha'is but directed that more covert or informal methods should be adopted to impede their progress and development. It urged the authorities to expel Baha'i students from universities and other institutions of higher education and to deny Baha'is access to employment in order to "deny them any position of influence."⁹⁵

Several years later, a leaked confidential letter from the central authorities of Payam-e Noor University to its regional branches confirmed that it was government policy that Baha'i students should not be permitted to enrol at the university and that the university authorities should expel any Baha'is who had been admitted. Yet, only one week earlier, an Iranian diplomat at the UN had categorically denied that any Baha'is or other students had been expelled from Iranian universities on account of their faith, asserting "No one in Iran because of their religion has been expelled from studying".⁹⁶

The Iranian government repeated this assertion as recently as September 2013 when responding to the draft report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, stating: "no individual is expelled from university or sent to a prison for merely holding certain beliefs." The Iranian government's statement further claimed that the relative absence of Baha'i students from universities in Iran was not due to government discrimination but the pressures exerted on Baha'is by Baha'i religious leaders:

"...many Baha'is under the influence of World Centre of Baha'i, which is an outlawed organization, are active and commit illegal and provocative activities in the Iranian

universities, defying the laws of higher education system in Iran. Those Baha'is students who observe laws are rejected administratively and spiritually and their relation would be severed by the Baha'i network. Furthermore, a significant number of Baha'is students were forced to withdraw from universities, and their human rights have been violated by Baha'is unlawful network."⁹⁷

Years earlier, the exclusion of Baha'is from higher education following the Cultural Revolution led some Iranian Baha'is to set up the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education (BIHE). Established in 1987, this operated as a privately-run alternative to the state system of higher education offering a range of degree programmes for Baha'i students. However, it faced repeated harassment by the security authorities, who arrested BIHE educators and several times forced the Institute to suspend its activities before bringing it to temporary closure and detaining BIHE leaders in May 2011, provoking international condemnation. Despite this, the BIHE has continued to function and offer higher education to Baha'i students, albeit under constant threat of further persecution. Senior Iranian leaders continue to denounce Baha'is and their religion – for example, in July 2013 Ayatollah Khamenei was reported by the Tasnim website to have issued a *fatwa* and warned Iranians to avoid socialising with Baha'is, whom he accused of being “deviant and misleading.”⁹⁸

5. ACADEMIC FREEDOM UNDER ATTACK

"I did not break any laws. I did not do anything illegal according to international standards but I have broken some Iranian laws because Iranian laws have no similarity to international standards. There are lots of unwritten laws."

Alireza Firouzi, banned student from Zanjan University, described his experience of expulsion and imprisonment to Amnesty International in March 2013.



ISNA
Students barred from entering the University of Tehran during demonstrations on national Student Day, 7 December 2006.
©ISNA/Saman Aghvami

Following Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's election as President in 2005, the authorities embarked on a renewed campaign of "Islamicization" of the universities and other institutions of higher education. This saw further tightening of rules on gender segregation and mixing of the sexes, the expulsion or suspension of student activists and increased use of "starring"⁹⁹ to threaten or intimidate other students. As well, it involved the removal or revision of humanities courses that the authorities deemed western-influenced and "un-Islamic" and the barring of female students from courses that they considered

suitable only for male students. In addition, university teachers and academic staff whom the authorities saw as critics or deemed overly "reformist" or insufficiently deferential to Iran's clerical leaders and the views they espoused were dismissed or forced into early retirement.



Demonstration at the University of Tehran on national Student Day, 7 December 2006. ©Islamic Student Association of Amir Kabir University

At the same time, the authorities imposed more stringent restrictions on free expression and the right to free association, using internet censorship by preventing exercise of the rights to peaceful protest and to form independent organizations. The impact of these measures went far beyond the academic sector, as did associated state repression, including arrests targeting government critics, human rights defenders, campaigners for women's rights, minority rights activists and others. The authorities held detainees without trial for long

periods or jailed them after unfair trials before Revolutionary Courts, often subjecting them to torture or other ill-treatment in pre-trial detention. Such human rights violations, already extensive and entrenched, became even more acute as the authorities quelled the mass peaceful protests that followed the June 2009 presidential election.



Security forces bar the way as students at Amir Kabir University demonstrate on 10 December 2006 against a visit next day by President Ahmadinejad. ©Islamic Student Association of Amir Kabir University



Demonstration at the University of Tehran on national Student Day, 7 December 2007. ©Islamic Student Association of Amir Kabir University

The first clear signs of student unrest in face of the authorities' new strictures emerged in 2007 at Amir Kabir University of Technology in Tehran, where protests and clashes erupted between students and members of the Basij after the circulation of what appeared to be student publications that criticized the government and were deemed offensive to Islam. In what became known as the "forged publications affair", student activists alleged that the purported student publications were not genuine but had been fraudulently produced and circulated in order to give the authorities a pretext to clamp down on them and suppress their real journals and publications.¹⁰⁰

In June 2008, new student protests erupted after a female student accused the Deputy Chancellor of Zanzan University, who headed its Disciplinary Committee, of attempting to sexually assault her. ISA activists, whom she informed, secretly filmed and recorded a meeting between her



Demonstration at the University of Tehran on national Student Day, 7 December 2007. ©Islamic Student Association of Amir Kabir University

and Deputy Chancellor and then published it on the internet. In protest, as many as 3,000 students participated in sit-ins to demand an official investigation into the sexual assault allegation and that the authorities should not take judicial measures against them for protesting and should allow students to organize freely and issue their own publications. The authorities responded by closing the university for several days and launching a crackdown. They arrested and jailed five students for between 6 and 10 months, with additional prison terms suspended,¹⁰¹ and suspended others from studying.

By the end of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's first four-year term, his policies towards the universities had lost him much of any support that he had received from students and academics his successful campaign for the presidency in 2005.



Student demonstration at Shahr-e Kord University in protest at the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in June 2009. The banner says "free elections".
©Islamic Student Association of Shahr-e Kord University

As the June 2009 presidential elections approached, those at the universities generally appear to have thrown their support behind the two leading reformist candidates standing against President Ahmadinejad, Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi. Consequently, the authorities saw the universities as a focal point of opposition, especially when mass protests swept the country following the official announcement that President Ahmadinejad

had won a large majority of votes.

In the days after voting took place, police and other security forces, including Basij, carried out violent raids on student dormitories at universities in Tehran and other cities. On 14 June 2009, police Special Guards and Basij forced their way into student dormitories at the University of Tehran using tear gas in enclosed spaces and possibly live fire. Student sources said five students were killed; the university authorities denied any deaths.¹⁰² Security forces took more than 130 students whom they detained in a basement prison within the headquarters of the Interior Ministry, where some said they were tortured. Subsequently, some of the students – whose identities the authorities have never revealed – are reported to have been sentenced to prison terms.¹⁰³ The day after the dormitory raid, 110 University of Tehran academics resigned from their teaching posts in protest against the violence of the police and other security forces.¹⁰⁴

The authorities' clampdown continued and widened as the mass protests against President Ahmadinejad's re-election spread. In Esfahan, police Special Guards and Basij attacked student dormitories and detained 140 students; in Tabriz, 10 students were detained. In Shiraz, senior university staff launched a protest and demanded the release of some 100

students who the security forces had detained. At Mazandaran University in Babolsar, police and Basij detained around 150 male students who surrendered after negotiating the free passage of female students from the university campus. Students were also reported to have been detained in Mashhad and in Zahedan. In July, police and Basij forced their way into student dormitories at Amir Kabir University of Technology using firearms and teargas, and arrested students marking the 10th anniversary of a previous violent crackdown on student protesters on 9 July 1999.¹⁰⁵

Security forces and Basij again used force on 4 November 2009, the 30th anniversary of the start of the US hostage crisis, to crush student protests in Tehran, Qazvin, Esfahan, Mashhad, Tabriz, Shiraz, Kerman and Ahvaz. In Esfahan, they were accused of shooting dead one student, Mehdi Nilforoushzadeh.¹⁰⁶ By then, the government's post-election crackdown had seen thousands of opposition activists and peaceful protestors arrested, brutal attacks on demonstrators in Tehran and other cities by security officials and Basij, and the killing of Neda Agha Soltan, a former student who had withdrawn from Islamic Azad University. She died in a Tehran street as a result of being shot by an alleged member of the Basij in an unprovoked attack that was captured on film and then seen around the world. As well, following persistent reports of torture and deaths in detention, the Supreme Leader had been forced to step in and announce the closure of Kahrizak detention centre near Tehran, where some of the worst excesses had occurred. At least two students were among the detainees who died at Kahrizak, apparently as a result of torture or other ill-treatment, in the period between the election in early June and the government's closure of Kahrizak at the end of July 2009.

Amir Javadifar, 25, a management student at the Qazvin branch of Islamic Azad University, was arrested on 9 July 2009 and beaten so badly by security forces during the protests that he required hospital treatment. He reportedly had internal bleeding. He was held at the Kahrizak detention centre but moved to Evin Prison prior to his death on 14 July 2009. He appeared to have been tortured: a forensic medical examination found that some of his bones had been broken and that his toenails had been pulled out.¹⁰⁷

Mohsen Rouholamini, 25, an Information Technology student at the University of Tehran whose father was one of the defeated 2009 presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei's senior advisors, was also brutally assaulted while detained at Kahrizak detention centre after his arrest, also on 9 July 2009. He was moved from Kahrizak to Evin Prison and then to hospital, where he died on 16 July. As he was the son of a senior member of Iran's political establishment, his death is thought to have been the one that triggered Ayatollah Khamenei to order the closure of the Kahrizak detention centre and order an investigation into reports of brutal ill-treatment of its inmates. On 31 August, Mehr News Agency reported that the Coroner's Office had attributed the death of Mohsen Rouholamini to "physical stress, bad living conditions, repeated assault and throwing the body at hard surfaces"; initially, the authorities had claimed that his death was due to meningitis.¹⁰⁸ After viewing his son's corpse, Mohsen Rouholamini's father reportedly said it was clear that he had been tortured and that he had sustained severe facial injuries.¹⁰⁹

In August 2009, with protests still continuing, the authorities launched a series of "show trials" of those accused of fomenting or supporting the protests. The accused included student activists, university academics, politicians and others known for their affiliations to

the reformist movement. In trials that were largely held in secret but opened briefly so that television cameras could film defendants “confessing” to the charges against them and apologising to the Revolutionary Court, the authorities accused opposition activists and demonstrators of seeking to foment a “soft” revolution against the Islamic Republic. The Revolutionary Courts sentenced tens of them to prison terms. Some of their cases are described below.

As these events were being played out, the authorities intensified their criticism of the universities, adding impetus to the “Islamicization” process. In August 2009, Ayatollah Khamenei publicly criticized the fact that “around 2 million out of the total 3.5 million university students”¹¹⁰ in Iran were studying human sciences rather than subjects that he considered more appropriate to the needs of the Islamic Republic.

As well, there was increased surveillance and repression on campuses as they were placed under closer control by Iran’s multiple, often overlapping, security bodies.¹¹¹ These include a cyber police force established in 2011 and¹¹² authorized to monitor use of personal computers and smart phones in student dormitories, libraries or homes, as well as to block access to websites – and the paramilitary Basij. Student activists who avoided detention and prison terms were barred from further study, as were others on their release from detention. Others fled abroad to escape arrest or to try and continue an education to which they were no longer permitted access in Iran. The Ministry of Science moved increasingly to pack the staff, as well as the student body, with individuals selected for their known loyalty to the government, acquired through service in the military or the Basij, rather than on the basis of academic criteria and merit.

In April 2012, Minister of Science, Kamran Daneshjoo, said that his ministry would not permit students who had been involved in the post-2009 election protests to receive a university education.¹¹³ In early 2011, there were renewed protest demonstrations sparked by the popular uprisings and protests in Tunisia, Egypt and other states on the Middle East and North Africa. The authorities quickly quelled them, however, and placed the two main opposition leaders and defeated 2009 presidential candidates, Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, together with the latter’s wife, university professor Zahra Rahnavard, under house arrest. All three continued to be so detained throughout President Ahmadinejad’s further years in power, and were still held as of March 2014, eight months into Hassan Rouhani’s presidential term.

RESURGENT “ISLAMICIZATION”

“Many disciplines of humanities are based on philosophies based on materialism and disbelief in divine and Islamic teachings. Teaching them causes lack of belief in divine and Islamic teachings.”

Ayatollah Khamenei, 30 August 2009¹¹⁴

TARGETING THE HUMANITIES

“Islamicization” of the universities and the educational system has been a core and recurring element of official policy since the very first days of the 1979 Revolution. Reflecting this, in the 1990s, the Ministry of Science established a specific Department for Islamicizing the Universities at the behest of Ayatollah Khamenei. Under a SCCR directive, this was renamed and given enhanced standing as the “Council for Islamization of Universities and Educational Centres” in 1997, and placed under the authority of the SCCR.¹¹⁵

Under its statute, the Council is mandated to devise policies to promote the Islamicization of Iran's universities and other institutions of higher education for consideration by the SCCR, to develop accompanying strategies and to oversee the implementation of relevant official regulations.¹¹⁶

The renewed official thrust towards "Islamicization" of the universities that followed President Ahmadinejad's election in 2005 gained greater momentum following the mass protests of 2009, which saw the universities emerge as a focal point of dissent and challenge to Iran's clerically-dominated leadership. Ayatollah Mohammad-Taqi Mesbah-Yazdi (generally known as Ayatollah Mesbah),¹¹⁷ a Qom-based cleric and vocal supporter of Ayatollah Khamenei, appears to have emerged as the main theorist behind this renewed push for "Islamicization". He also supported Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in both the 2005 and 2009 presidential election campaigns.

Led by the Supreme Leader, the authorities particularly targeted universities' humanities courses, seen as still overly influenced by "Western" thinking, values and secularism. At the end of August 2009, as protestors continued to fill the street of Tehran and other cities, Ayatollah Khamenei voiced concern¹¹⁸ about the number of university students studying human sciences and publicly derided humanities courses which, he said, led to "disbelief in Islamic and divine teachings". Claiming that such courses were based on "materialistic philosophical concepts", he concluded that they caused "misgivings about religious principles."¹¹⁹

Following the Supreme Leader's intervention, the SCCR commissioned the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, a Tehran-based research centre under the auspices of the Ministry of Science, to revise universities' humanities courses. According to the Institute's director, many topics and references taught within the courses had remained unchanged for 20 years and "were not directed at the Iranian-Islamic culture".¹²⁰

In September 2010, the Ministry of Science, which controls all admissions to state-run universities, announced that no students would be admitted to 13 humanities and arts courses that year while the curricula were under revision. The authorities aimed to reduce the number of humanities courses and their share of courses in higher education from 45 per cent to 36 per cent. The Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies revised 380 subjects and set out to prepare 58 new textbooks.¹²¹ In November 2011, the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies reported that 38 humanities undergraduate study areas had been revised, including philosophy, journalism, psychology, economics, and political and social sciences.¹²²

The changes were first put into practice at Allameh Tabataba'i University, which had formerly offered 19 humanities courses, at the start of the 2011-12 academic year, when students were admitted to study only six courses. They included Law and Theology and Islamic Knowledge but courses in journalism, political science, history, sociology and subjects such as pedagogy and education in early childhood were no longer available for study.¹²³

Two months later, the university's dean announced that the Ministry of Science had approved courses in psychology, political science, and management that Allameh Tabataba'i University

had successfully “Islamicized” and that these would now be rolled out in all Iranian universities.¹²⁴ As well, Allameh Tabataba’i University offered new undergraduate courses, such as “Psychology as Viewed by the Qu’ran and Narrations” and “Social Science as Viewed by the Qu’ran and Narrations.”

Further revisions followed, undertaken by 70 committees appointed by the Ministry of Science, covering a wide range of humanities with other arts courses, the basic sciences, engineering and other subjects also scheduled for revision.

In April 2013, the Ministry of Science omitted the School of Management and Economics at the prestigious Sharif University of Technology in Tehran from the list of courses available to university applicants, in effect announcing its intention to dissolve the faculty.¹²⁵ The Ministry had previously asserted that as a university of technology it should not possess a humanities faculty. In reality, the Ministry appears to have been unhappy about the School’s relative academic independence. In late 2012 or early 2013, the university’s chancellor told the School’s dean that he intended to recruit new academic staff for it and that it should offer new subject courses. The dean, however, rejected this, insisting that the School had sufficient autonomy to recruit its own staff and develop its own curriculum. Following negotiations between the university and the Ministry of science, the Ministry agreed to allow the School to accept students for one further year while it remained under investigation, according to a ministry official.¹²⁶

As a result of the “Islamicization” revisions, fundamental changes were made to the Women’s Studies course that had first been offered for Master’s students at three universities in 2000, when the reformist President Khatami was in office. One of these, the exclusively postgraduate Tarbiat Modares University in Tehran, offered “Women’s Rights in Islam” as a main subject. Later, the University of Tehran also offered courses specifically focused on women, including units on feminist theory. In May 2012, however, the SCCR’s 20-member Specialized Council for Transforming Humanities replaced the women’s studies courses with Family Studies and Women in Islam, asserting that the Women’s Studies course was in serious conflict with Islam.¹²⁷

TIGHTENING THE RULES ON WOMEN’S DRESS

Iran’s dress code for women and girls, has long been a controversial issue. During his successful campaign for the presidency in 2005 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was reported to have upbraided those who found it offensive for a woman to have “a few hairs” visible under her headscarf. After he became President, however, there was a discernible tightening of enforcement of the official dress code, not least on campus, where dedicated officials were tasked with monitoring students’ dress and behaviour, and empowered to impose disciplinary sanctions on those held to have breached the rules. Female students accused of dress code violations were issued with written reprimands; suspended from study for one or more semesters and denied access to university facilities, including dormitories; and in some cases physically beaten or expelled.

In a report on violence against female students that it published in November 2012, the Women’s Commission of the OCU said it had recorded “more than 220 reports regarding gender segregation, discrimination based on sex, arrest of female students, summons of female students to Disciplinary Committees, expulsion from university or dormitories or

deprivation of other facilities” between May 2010 and June 2012.¹²⁸ According to the report many female students at universities across Iran had been punished for alleged violations of the official dress code – for example, failing to wear the hejab (as at Iran University of Science and Technology and other universities); failing to attend ‘hejab classes’ (Iran University of Science and Technology); and wearing clothing or make up considered “vulgar” or “un-Islamic” (Shahid Beheshti University). In some cases, university enforcement officials were alleged to have assaulted students, as at the Islamic Azad University in Rasht. At Azad University’s Roudehen branch, east of Tehran, two female students and a male student were reported to have been assaulted by university officials in April 2012 for wearing what they deemed “inappropriate clothing”, with one of the female students thrown to the ground and injured.¹²⁹ In another case at the Roudehen branch of Azad University, disciplinary officials were reported to have assaulted a female student in October 2008 when she refused to submit to a body search.¹³⁰

University authorities have also penalized female students for dress code infractions by denying them access to student dormitories, forcing them to find alternative accommodation in order to remain at university. For example, authorities at the University of Shahr-e Kord in central Iran barred 15 female students from its dormitory in April 2012, accusing them of failing to observe the hejab code. Reports indicated, however, that most of them were penalized because they had participated in student rallies demanding improved conditions and facilities, where they had been threatened with being barred from dormitories.¹³¹ A second group of 50 were barred in October 2012.¹³²

In 2011, the Council for Islamization of the Universities and Educational Centres published the ‘Proposed Scheme for Authorized and Unauthorized Clothes of the Students’, aimed at ensuring compliance with the official dress code. The scheme defined the examples of “disregarding Islamic dressing” under Note 3/D of Article 6 of the 1995 Disciplinary Regulations for Students. It enumerated the officially-approved form of dress for both males and females, and described unacceptable forms of clothing. The list went into minute detail, distinguishing which socks, shoes, ornaments, cosmetics, nails and hairstyles were permissible, and which were not, as well as the appropriate thickness of clothes and trousers.¹³³ There is no record of the SCCR having ratified this Scheme but some university authorities quickly began to apply it and the Ministry of Interior declared that it would enforce the Scheme and the rules it contains in academic year 2012-13.¹³⁴

The Ministry of Health and Medical Education approved a set of Rules of Professional Conduct of Medical Students in August 2012 and communicated them in December 2012, together with a set of Executive Rules for Implementation of the Rules of Conduct. The rules include strict clothing restrictions, instructions that finger nails must be kept short, require those with tattoos to refrain from displaying them, and call for the avoidance of loud conversation and even laughter.¹³⁵

A complementary section of the Executive Rules covers the requirement that universities issue the Professional Dress and Conduct Report Sheet to instructors of medical curricula. This is used to mark students in relation to their compliance with the dress code, and may be used as a basis to take disciplinary measures against those held to have violated the code.¹³⁶ Alongside these centrally-driven developments, some universities have also devised additional measures to reinforce the dress and conduct codes. In July 2012, for example, the deputy

chancellor for cultural issues of the University of Tehran disclosed that the university authorities had determined to design their own forms of suitable attire for academic and other staff, and for students, as they were tired of “dealing with 350 students who are frequenting the university in mannequin attire.”¹³⁷ He said also that the university authorities had temporarily banned or expelled several female students for failing to comply with the code on wearing the *hejab*.

Shiraz Medical Sciences University designated separate entrances for male and female students and even academics in its schools and some classes in 2012. University authorities were also reported to have installed closed circuit television to monitor students, and to have abandoned mixed visits and programmes involving both male and female students.

Employees of hospitals and clinics affiliated with the university were also alleged to have been penalized: clinic secretaries deemed to be contravening the *hejab* code during a visit by the university’s chancellor in 2011 were reportedly dismissed and the chancellor was reported to have told teaching staff to admonish students who wore “unconventional clothing” and to penalize them with lower marks if they did so again.¹³⁸

At the Iran University of Science and Technology in Tehran in 2011, the Dean of the Civil Engineering School and head of the university’s Academic Basij, reportedly barred 15 female students from registering for the new semester for failing to attend mandatory briefings on “hejab and chastity” (*hejab va efa*) that he convened, and warned other female students that they would be punished if they failed to comply with the *hejab* and chastity regulations.¹³⁹



Demonstration at the University of Tehran on national Student Day, 7 December 2006. The banner says “We condemn ‘starring’ and banning of students from education”. ©ISNA/Saman Aghvami

TARGETING STUDENT ACTIVISTS: “STARRING”, SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

In recent years, university authorities have increasingly used a “starring” system to warn students that they are under suspicion and may incur disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion.

The term “starred students” came into use during the administration of President Khatami when Mostafa Mo’in was the Minister of Science. Years later, however, while acknowledging this, he accused President Ahmadinejad’s government of expanding a system that had involved only a few cases each year under President Khatami into a major instrument of repression. In a note he wrote in

June 2013 in response to accusations against him, he said:

“It was a normal procedure [under President Khatami] that following the announcement of the results of the University Entrance Exam for the post graduate level, the files of about 10 to 15 students would be reconsidered [i.e. “starred”] because of missing documents or disciplinary or moral considerations. In the majority of these cases, however, the issue would get resolved... Unfortunately, since the start of the ninth administration [under President Ahmadinejad] this normal procedure became a widespread phenomenon with the name of “giving stars” in order to suppress students who are politically active.”¹⁴⁰

Mostafa Mo'in reportedly said that during the period that he was Minister of Science, the Ministry marked a student's record sheet with one star if their university file did not contain all the required documents, or two stars if there were unresolved issues relating to the student from the university's Disciplinary Committee.

In December 2012, Kamran Daneshjoo, Minister of Science throughout President Amadinejad's second term, said that SCCR regulations required the Ministry of Science to send the files of applicants to “relevant bodies” – (namely, the Ministry of Intelligence) for approval; if the Ministry received a negative response or no response at all, it concluded that file was incomplete, so the application could not be approved.¹⁴¹

A 4 August 1998 SCCR resolution stipulates:

“...the Ministries of Culture, Higher Education, Ministry of Health and Medical Education, and the Islamic Azad Universities are obliged to continue sending the list of applicants for the Masters and PhD degrees to the Ministry of Intelligence in order to obtain the Ministry's approval. The Ministry of Intelligence must respond to the submitted requests within two months [if they have a reservation]. Failing to do so would be interpreted as the approval of the applicant by the Ministry of Intelligence. In cases where the Ministry of Intelligence disqualifies an applicant, the reasons for such decisions should be communicated to the Student Selection Board of the requesting body in order to enable them to convince the applicant.”¹⁴²

After President Ahmadinejad took office in 2005, the authorities increasingly resorted to a “starring” system to target student activists and, in essence, convey an official warning that they were under scrutiny by the authorities and will be liable to suspension or expulsion from higher education unless they conform. This came to light when applicants for postgraduate courses saw “stars” marked next to their names on their entrance examination record sheets.¹⁴³

The authorities provided no written explanation of the “star” system to students, as far as Amnesty International is aware, but it appears that “one star” students were allowed to enrol and continue their studies if they provided a written undertaking to the university's security department that they would not engage in political activism. “Two star” students had to provide a similar undertaking to the Education Assessment Organization of the Ministry of Science before they were given approval to continue their studies. Students who received three stars, however, were excluded from continuing their higher education.

Mohammad-Mehdi Zahedi, who was Minister of science during President Ahmadinejad's first

term of office, asserted in December 2006 that the Ahmadinejad government had inherited the “starring” system and denied that any “three star” students had been expelled because of their political activities; those expelled, he claimed, “had a record of three years’ imprisonment, flogging, raping women, etc.”¹⁴⁴ Even then, he claimed, they had been barred from continuing in higher education by “authorities other than” the Ministry of Science. This followed reports in September 2006 that 73 students, mostly members of the OCU,¹⁴⁵ had been “starred” on account of their political or cultural activities and the disclosure by a member of the parliament that according to university admissions officials a number of students had been disqualified by order of the Ministry of Intelligence.¹⁴⁶

According to media reports, the universities refused to register 17 “starred students” for the 2006-07 academic year.¹⁴⁷ They also reported a statement by Morteza Noorbakhsh, head of the Ministry of Science’s Selection Department, that the authorities had obtained pledges from between 50 and 60 students that they would refrain from unauthorized political activities.¹⁴⁸ The student organization, Advocacy Council for the Right to Education (ACRE), however, said that some 1,421 students had been required to submit such pledges before the authorities would accept their registration, while 17 “three star” students had been permanently barred.¹⁴⁹ Former students have told Amnesty International that the 17 students were formally notified of their exclusion in letters from the authorities, unlike other students who have been more recently barred without receiving any formal notification from the university or other authorities.

Given this lack of formal notification, it is impossible independently to ascertain how many students have been barred from higher education, permanently or temporarily, on account of their political opinions or activities, or because they are Baha’is or members of other minorities subject to discrimination. The available information is fragmentary - for example, according to ACRE, in 2008 some 40 applicants for postgraduate study at Islamic Azad University were not issued with record sheets, either because they had been identified as Baha’is or for “ethical” reasons – and so were denied entry,¹⁵⁰ or comes only from government sources. In 2012, for example, the media reported a statement by Minister of Science, Kamran Daneshjoo, in which he said that 35 out of 6,200 students initially admitted to doctoral study courses in 2011 had been barred as a result of the findings of investigations by official bodies, assumed to be a reference to the Ministry of Intelligence. He reportedly said that only around 30 out of some 10,500 students had been barred for the same reasons in 2012.¹⁵¹ In July 2013, the Human Rights Committee of the OCU published a report in which it recorded 768 cases of “suspended and starred” students and 250 cases of expulsion from university between April 2005 and March 2013.¹⁵²

Mehdi Amin Zadeh began studying at Shahid Rajaee University in 1996.¹⁵³ He was a member of the Central Council of ISA and the Central Office of the OCU, and was a student activist until 2005. That year he took the Master’s entrance exam but he was not allowed to study. He told Amnesty International:

“I was the first person (except for Baha’i students) who was banned from studying – in effect I was ‘starred’ even though that term [only] came into existence later.”

One former student who had entered Shahr-e Kord University in 2009 told Amnesty International in 2013 that the university authorities had adopted a cat and mouse approach

in his case. Within months of his beginning his studies, the university's Disciplinary Committee reprimanded him after he and other students protested against an official order closing down the ISA. Later, he was arrested in February 2011 after participating in a demonstration and taken before the Revolutionary Court, which allowed his release on bail. Following this, in May 2011 the Disciplinary Committee accused him of "co-operating with the foreign media and creating an atmosphere of fear for the university authorities." The Committee prohibited him from using student facilities, including his dormitory, for two semesters. The following month, the Committee accused him of "insulting the system and the university authorities", "membership of Facebook", "insulting the revolution", and "disturbing order at university and violating university regulations." Security officials then physically prevented him from sitting his exams, causing him to realise that he had been expelled, although he received no formal notification. Soon after, security forces raided his family home; he was absent at the time and, fearing arrest, soon after left Iran. He said that after his flight his parents had received a letter from the university authorities which stated that he had been expelled because he had failed to sit his exams.¹⁵⁴

Hossein Torkashvand told Amnesty International that the Central Disciplinary Committee had approved his expulsion from the University of Tehran in June 2010. In 2008, he learnt that he had been marked with two "stars" when taking the entrance exam for admission to a postgraduate course:

"That meant that I had to sign a paper saying that I would avoid any political activities in order to be allowed to start my Master's."

He knew that three stars would mean his instant expulsion; however, this was confirmed to him when he was later summoned to appear before the Central Disciplinary Committee of the Ministry of Science after security forces detained him for a time on account of his peaceful political activities. The Committee told him that he could expect to be expelled, and this was confirmed in June 2010. Unlike most expelled students, he managed to obtain the formal expulsion order through a member of the university's staff. He fled Iran in January 2012 after he was summoned by the Revolutionary Court to attend his court hearing.¹⁵⁵

Amir Rezaei, an Oroumieh University student who supported Mir Hossein Mousavi in the presidential election of June 2009, told Amnesty International that Ministry of Intelligence officials arrested him the day after the election and detained him for six days. He was arrested again, by Revolutionary Guards, after the mass protests at the time of the Ashoura festival on 27 December 2009, when he was held for 25 or 26 days before being released after a judge ordered his "conditional acquittal." The university's Disciplinary Committee initially suspended him for two semesters after he publicly criticized the concept of *velayat-e faqih*, then summoned him in May 2011 and told him that the university had expelled him. He left Iran in June 2011.¹⁵⁶

Like many other students, **Arjang Alipour**, then studying at Shiraz University, was expelled after he participated in protest demonstrations at the university. He told Amnesty International¹⁵⁷:

"The last demonstration I attended in the University was on 14 February 2011... within only two weeks I was summoned to the Disciplinary Committee four times. They were threatening me each time. This resulted in a two-semester suspended ban from studying. They held the

appeal session without my knowledge and presence – and contrary to their own regulations. In this session they decided to send my file to the Central Disciplinary Committee in the Ministry of Science, which expelled me from university and gave me a five-year ban from studying in all Iranian universities.”



Reza Ghazinouri was expelled from university by the Central Disciplinary Committee of the Ministry of Science on account of his peaceful political activism. ©Private

Reza Ghazinouri, a pro-democracy campaigner and postgraduate student at the University of Tehran, told Amnesty International that he appeared before the Central Disciplinary Committee, where he urged the Committee to allow him to complete his studies and leave:

“They told me that is exactly what we do not want to happen. They said, ‘We know that you are getting a Master’s degree in sociology then you will go to the USA and get a PhD and then you are going to cause troubles for the system. This is dangerous for us. We prefer to expel you now so you would only have a BA, go to military service and cannot raise your voice in any way. It is more difficult for us to deal with a Doctor.’”¹⁵⁸

Some students were expelled from university after serving prison sentences on account of their political activities or opinions.

Since the election of President Rouhani in June 2013, several developments have occurred which may signal a relaxation of official policy. On 11 September 2013, Ja’gar Tofighi, the interim Minister of Science, announced that he had established a working group to investigate complaints made by students who had been banned from higher education and lecturers and other academic staff.¹⁵⁹ Five days later, the Ministry of Science said it had decided that students who had been banned since the 2011-2012 academic year could submit complaints to the new ministerial working group and return to their studies if their complaints were upheld. Those whose banning preceded the 2011-2012 academic year were instructed that they should take the annual university entrance exam in order to return to higher education.

In November 2013, the Ministry of Science submitted a report to the government on its activities during the first 100 days since the formation of President Rouhani’s cabinet. In this, the Ministry indicated that it had investigated 400 complaints submitted by banned students, as a result of which it had permitted 126 students to resume their studies after they had provided signed undertakings whose content, however, was not specified.¹⁶⁰ In October 2013, the Interim Dean of Allameh Tabataba’i University announced that the university authorities had permitted the return of 12 “starred” students and two lecturers who had previously been dismissed.¹⁶¹

At the end of March 2014, few details were yet available about the methods and proceedings

of the working group established by the Ministry of Science and it was unclear how many banned students and lecturers had been permitted to return to the universities, and on what conditions. It appeared, however, that any decision by the Ministry of Science to allow a banned student to return to university required the approval of the Ministry of Intelligence before it could take effect. In December 2013, a member of the Research and Education Commission of Parliament, Alireza Montazeri, interviewed by Fars News Agency, stated that the return of “starred students” to universities without the views of security bodies was impossible.¹⁶²

What is clear is that the Ministry of Science has faced serious criticism from several influential quarters, including the parliament. In January 2014, three members of the parliament’s Research and Education Commission submitted a formal complaint against Minister of Science Reza Faraji Dana to the parliament’s Article 90 Commission, accusing his ministry of failing to provide documents and other evidence on the return to university of formerly “starred” students and others who had received warnings from the Ministry of Intelligence.¹⁶³

At the end of March 2014, hundreds of students were believed to be still banned from continuing their higher education on account of their peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association or assembly. As well, Baha’is remained banned from enrolling in state-administered universities, medical schools or other institutions of higher education.

ARRESTS, TORTURE AND IMPRISONMENT

At various periods throughout the history of the Islamic Republic, students, teachers and academics have been among those particularly targeted by the Ministry of Intelligence and other security authorities for expressing dissent or leading protests. Often, they have been arrested and detained in harsh conditions, tortured or subjected to other forms of ill-treatment, and tried before grossly unfair Revolutionary Courts on vaguely-drawn charges,¹⁶⁴ and convicted and sentenced to prison terms and, in some case, flogging.



Student protest at Amir Kabir University in support of imprisoned students.
©Daneshjoo News

Many formerly detained students have alleged that security officials blindfolded and beat them at the time of their arrest and when they were being transported to their initial place of detention, and that they were then subjected to torture and other ill-treatment during interrogation in order to extract “confessions”. The most common methods cited include severe beatings; the application of electric shocks to various

parts of the body; suspension upside down and by the ankles for long periods; rape and threats of rape of both men and women. Detainees have also reported being confined in very small spaces; subjected to death threats and mock executions; threatened that members of their families will be arrested and tortured; deprived of light or continuously exposed to bright light; denied sleep for long periods; and deprived of food and water.

The Iranian authorities rarely investigate torture allegations made by detainees and defendants or make any efforts to hold those responsible for torture to account, contrary to their obligations under international human rights law. Generally, investigations have been mounted only when the victims have high status because of their political connections – such as certain of the detainees who died as a result of torture or other ill-treatment at the Kahrizak detention facility in mid-2009 – or because they have another or dual nationality.

Even in such cases, however, the authorities have disclosed very little information about the investigative process and it has not met international standards, such as those relating to independence and transparency. The cases described below are illustrative of a pattern of serious human rights violations that has been long entrenched in Iran and whose victims have included not only students and academics but political activists, lawyers, human rights defenders, women's human rights campaigners, minority rights activists, journalists, bloggers, film makers, trades unionists and people from many other walks of life who the authorities have targeted on account of their real or perceived opinions or because of their ethnic or religious identity.

Student activist, **Ehsan Mansouri**, was arrested by armed Ministry of Intelligence officials in Tehran in 2007 in connection with the “forged publications affair.” Five years later and in exile, he told Amnesty International about the torture to which he was subjected during his arrest and detention:¹⁶⁵

“They caught and handcuffed me. They pulled me on the ground for about 50 metres to their car while constantly beating me. Then they put me in a car and drove me to the Intelligence’s detention. On our way, the man who was sitting next to me kept on beating me on the face and sides.”

Ehsan Mansouri was later transferred to Evin Prison. He told Amnesty International:

“After being [medically] examined, I was sent to solitary confinement. The following day the interrogations started. I was blindfolded, taken to a room and had to sit on a chair facing the wall. My interrogators were behind me. They have special techniques for interrogation. First, it was an interrogator that was not beating me that much but who made me exhausted. My first interrogation lasted for 48 hours... When the next interrogator came I felt his presence in the room by a punch in my face. He kept on beating me for an hour without even asking me any questions. This continued until the next morning. In the morning the calmer interrogator came again. This form of interrogation continued for 13 days.

I was beaten severely during these 13 days. They were beating my kidneys... some days I was interrogated for 10 or 12 hours by four or five interrogators who would swap because they would get tired. In these 10 or 12 hours of interrogation, I was beaten for three or four hours. They used to make me stand for very long hours or would force me continuously to do squats. Sometimes they would sit on the chairs and they would make me walk on my hands and feet in the room with one of the interrogators sitting on my back. Sometimes, when I

was in this situation, one of the interrogators would hold the interrogation paper with his toes and keep it in front of my face and ask me to read it. They wanted to humiliate me. After 13 days I 'confessed' to everything. [After] the pressures decreased. There were fewer beatings. [But] we were in solitary confinement for two months. Solitary confinement is the worst form of torture. "Sometimes, they would leave me in my cell for 10 days. This isolation and being unaware of what is happening was very disturbing."

Ehsan Mansouri was sentenced to two years' imprisonment by Branch six of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on charges of "spreading propaganda against the system" and "insulting the Supreme Leader". He was released on 18 August 2008 on probation.

Hossein Torkashvand,¹⁶⁶ a student activist at Amir Kabir University, had been repeatedly summoned for interrogation in 2007 in connection with the "forged publications affair". Security officials arrested him together with other students in November 2008 as they rehearsed a song about the student movement that they intended to perform on the national Students Day. He was detained for a week before being charged with "acting against national security" and "illegal gathering" and released on bail. He was again detained on 5 February 2009 by plain-clothed security officials who recognized him from his previous arrest when he and some friends were near to the site of a planned gathering that the authorities had cancelled at short notice. After two nights at Gholhak police station in North Tehran, he and those arrested with him were taken before a Revolutionary Court, which authorized their continued detention. They were taken to Evin Prison and held incommunicado and in solitary confinement in Section 240 for four weeks before being moved to the prison's Section 209, which is controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence. His memories of his ill-treatment in custody were still vivid when he spoke to Amnesty International in April 2013:

"They also shaved our hair. Then the interrogations started along with beatings and physical torture. They were making us stand for long hours. They were making us do squats for long periods. I had done so many squats that I could not bend my legs... I was not even able to go to the toilet because of the pain. There were also threatening me; all sorts of threats against me, my family."

He said Ministry of Intelligence officials pressed him to become their informer and spy on other student activists, and tortured him when he refused.

He was released on 4 May 2009. By then, he said, he was "in a very bad psychological state", yet Intelligence Ministry officials again summoned him after his release. "Each time I was blindfolded and pressured to work for them", he told Amnesty International. After suffering these abuses, he severed his relationships with other student activists and left Tehran.

EVIN PRISON

Some students who have been arrested for their legitimate student activities have ended up in Evin Prison in Tehran. Officially, the prison is administered by the State Prisons and Security and Corrective Measures Organization (hereafter the Prisons' Organization), a body under the control of the Judiciary. However, certain sections of the prison where political detainees are held are controlled by different security forces – the Ministry of Intelligence and State Security, the Revolutionary Guards, the Special Court for the Clergy, and possibly other forces. These operate effectively as prisons within a prison, in which their conditions and treatment of their inmates are

determined by the agencies that control them, not by the Prisons' Organization.¹⁶⁷ Reports of torture and other ill-treatment of detainees in these facilities are prevalent.

Section 240 reportedly comprises four floors of solitary confinement cells. It is sometimes used to hold prominent political prisoners, but ex-detainees have stated that it is also used to imprison large groups of detainees following mass arrests.

Section 209 is run by the Ministry of Intelligence. According to former detainees, it comprises mostly single cells. It is used to detain women as well as men. Many detainees in this section have been held incommunicado for weeks or even months at a time, often in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance, while their interrogation continues before formal charges are brought against them. Sometimes, detainees have also been held here for long periods in solitary confinement. Detainees are generally not permitted access to books or newspapers, similar to Sections 240 and 2A, and their presence within Evin Prison is often not recorded by the Prisons' Organization. Most are held on political or "security-related" grounds. Torture of detainees is reported to be commonplace, and many detainees have complained that when they were in need of medical treatment it was either denied or delayed. Section 209 is off limits even to representatives of the Prisons' Organization, although they ostensibly have responsibility for Evin Prison and its inmates, and no independent inspections appear to be allowed.

Section 2A – also known as Old Section 325 – is controlled by the Revolutionary Guards. It is used to hold political detainees whose cases the authorities regard as particularly sensitive, mostly during the interrogation phase. Former detainees have reported that they were tortured while held in this section.

A number of student activists who were jailed after unfair trials by Revolutionary Courts on charges connected to the peaceful mass protests that followed the 2009 presidential election remained in prison in March 2014, eight months after the election of President Rouhani. They included the following:

Sayed Ziaoddin (Zia) Nabavi has been imprisoned since 14 June 2009 when security forces arrested him shortly after he attended a peaceful protest against President Ahmadinejad's re-election. In January 2010, Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced him to 15 years' imprisonment, later reduced on appeal to 10 years' imprisonment, to be served in internal exile in Izeh, Khuzestan province, and a flogging of 74 lashes. The court convicted him of "gathering and colluding against national security", "spreading propaganda against the system", "disturbing public order", and most seriously, *moharebeh*, "enmity against God". In spite of his strong denial, the court found him guilty of having links and cooperating with the outlawed People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), several thousand of whose members



Zia Nabavi, a student activist and prisoner of conscience serving a 10-year prison term, is a "starred" student. ©Private

have lived in exile for many years in a camp in Iraq. His conviction on the lesser charges was overturned on appeal but the 10 year prison term and internal exile that he received for “enmity against God” was confirmed. Initially held at Evin Prison in Tehran, Zia Nabavi is now held at Karoun Prison in Ahvaz, south-western Iran, far from his family, and in harsh conditions. He alleged that security officials beat, kicked and humiliated him during his pre-trial detention and that prison guards assaulted him when he arrived at Karoun Prison in September 2010. Since his arrest in 2009, Zia Nabavi has only been granted a nine-day leave from prison in January/February 2014.

Prior to his arrest and imprisonment, Zia Nabavi co-founded ACRE in 2008, to represent the interests of students whom the authorities barred from continuing in higher education because of their political opinions or identity as Baha'is. He was first arrested when he was at Mazandaran University in 2007 after he joined a sit-in protest against the arrest of another student. Later, he was barred from continuing his studies after he was issued with three “stars” on account of his peaceful political activism. During his imprisonment, Zia Nabavi wrote a poem that he addressed to the judge who sentenced him, whose opening line reads “Alas! Title of Justice they gave you...and all you handed me was injustice”.¹⁶⁸

On 6 March 2013, Zia Nabavi was taken from Karoun prison to a Revolutionary Court in Ahvaz where he reportedly faced a new charge of “spreading propaganda against the system” because of comments he made in a letter he wrote from prison criticizing the manner in which an Ahwazi Arab prisoner named Mohammad Ali Amouri was sentenced to death. The court acquitted him on 14 October 2013.¹⁶⁹

Amnesty International considers Zia Nabavi to be a prisoner of conscience and continues to call on the Iranian authorities to ensure his immediate and unconditional release.



Bahareh Hedayat, student activist and member of Iran's Campaign for Equality, is serving 10 years in prison, imposed because of her peaceful student and human rights activities. ©Campaign for Equality

Bahareh Hedayat, a women's human rights activist and member of the Central Committee of the OCU, has been in prison since her arrest on 31 December 2009. In May 2010, Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced her to seven years and six months in prison after it convicted her of “insulting the President”, “insulting the Supreme Leader”, “gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security”, and “spreading propaganda against the system”. As a result, she also became liable to serve an earlier suspended sentence of two years' imprisonment that she incurred for participating in a June 2006 demonstration to demand an end to discrimination against women in law.

On 30 April 2011, she was sentenced to an additional six months in prison in connection with a statement that she jointly wrote (with Majid Tavakkoli and Mehdieh Golrou, also student rights activists) on the occasion of Iran's national

Student Day, 7 December 2010, in which they praised the campaigning efforts of Iranian students abroad, and considered the anniversary a great opportunity to protect and promote the student movement. She is held at Evin Prison in Tehran, from where she has been allowed temporary release on several occasions.

In April 2012, she marked both her 31st birthday and her fourth wedding anniversary by writing an open letter to her husband, Amin Ahmadian, from prison. In this, she wrote:

*“Aside from missing everyone (even though it is not possible to put it aside), you can see your life pass you by in front of your eyes. You have no natural environment to think and grow. Even if you try to read books and you are able to get your hands on books that are less censored, you still cannot challenge your thoughts”.*¹⁷⁰

Amnesty International considers Bahareh Hedayat a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely on account of her peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, and calls for her immediate and unconditional release.



Majid Tavakkoli, student leader, has been imprisoned since his arrest on national Student Day, 7 December 2009, after he spoke at a peaceful rally at Amir Kabir University in Tehran. ©Private

Majid Tavakkoli has been imprisoned since security forces arrested him on national Student Day, 7 December 2009, after he spoke at a peaceful rally at Amir Kabir University in Tehran, where he was then studying. He had previously been detained several times, including in connection with the “forged publications affair” of 2007. On 8 December 2009, the Fars News Agency, which has links to the Revolutionary Guards, published a photograph of him wearing women’s clothes and claimed that this was how he was dressed at the time of his arrest, apparently in an effort to discredit him.¹⁷¹ He was not permitted to contact his family until 6 January 2010, and then only very briefly, by which time his trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran had already been completed. He was not permitted to meet his defence lawyer until 11 January 2010.

The Revolutionary Court convicted him on charges that included “illegal gathering”, “spreading propaganda”, “insulting” government officials, and “acting against national security by conspiring against the system.” The court sentenced him to nine years in prison, to be followed by a five year ban that prohibited him from participating in all political activities and leaving the country. At the request of the Ministry of Science, the court also banned Majid Tavakkoli for life from studying at any university in Iran; as a result, he is not permitted to study for a degree while in prison. In April 2011, Bahareh Hedayat and Majid Tavakkoli, together with a third student, Mehdi Golrou, were each sentenced to serve an additional six months in prison for “spreading propaganda against the system” after they issued a joint letter from prison on the occasion of Student Day in 2010.¹⁷² Majid Tavakkoli has been held at Raja’i Shahr Prison in Karaj, 30 miles from Tehran, since his transfer from

Evin Prison in August 2010, although his family home is in Shiraz, south west Iran. Despite the fact that he receives few visits due to the distance and his parents' infirmity, he has been denied permission to make telephone calls. He has endured long periods in solitary confinement and has gone on hunger strike several times to protest against his treatment and conditions, leading to concern for his health. In October 2013, Majid Tavakkoli was granted a brief prison leave for the first time since his arrest and imprisonment in 2009. He returned to Raja'I Shahr Prison four days later.¹⁷³ In a mark of solidarity, Norwegian students awarded Majid Tavakkoli their Student Peace Prize for 2013.

Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

"I am not upset that Majid is in prison, I am proud of my son. But they deprive him of his rights as a prisoner. He has the legal right to call his family, to have cabin visitations, to receive furlough. But I don't know why they will not allow it... This is a mother's heart-to-heart, a mother who has not seen her child for three years. For three years I wait in anticipation and longing. For two years my son is banned from using the telephone. I posted a bail expecting to finally see Majid and they blocked his temporary release without giving any reason... My message to the authorities is to listen to a mother's cries. My only demand is that since they prohibited his furlough, they grant Majid his telephone rights or at least that they allow him to call on visitation days. I will pay for the phone calls so that on days when other prisoners have visitors, I can at least talk to my son on the phone."¹⁷⁴

Majid Tavakkoli's mother in an interview with Daneshjoo News in advance of Iran's national Student Day on 7 December 2012.

Shiva Nazar Ahari, a human rights activist and member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, is serving a four-year prison sentence in Evin Prison for her peaceful human rights activities. She was arrested immediately after the disputed presidential election of 2009 and held for some three months. She was arrested again in December 2009 along with two other CHRR members while on their way to the funeral of Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, a senior cleric critical of the Iranian government, and held as a detainee until September 2010. In February 2010 she reported that she had been kept for most of the detention in a "cage-like" solitary confinement cell, with no room to stretch her arms and legs. In September 2010, she was sentenced to 74 lashes, converted to a fine, and six years in prison after a Revolutionary Court convicted her on charges of "enmity against God," "gathering and colluding to commit a crime against national security" and "spreading propaganda against the system." Her sentence was reduced on appeal to four years' imprisonment after her conviction for "gathering and colluding" was overturned. She began serving this sentence on 8 September 2012. She and other female prisoners went on a hunger strike in October 2012 to protest against the abusive treatment to which they had been subjected at Evin Prison. On 6 November, she and seven other political prisoners ended their hunger strike after they filed a complaint against the guards and the prison authorities agreed to conduct an investigation.



Shiva Nazar Ahari, a member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, is serving a four-year prison sentence in Tehran's Evin Prison for her peaceful human rights activities. ©Private

As of May 2014, she remained on prison leave, granted to her in September 2013.

Amnesty International considers Shiva Nazar Ahari a prisoner of conscience and calls for her unconditional release.

Navid Khanjani, a student banned from pursuing his university studies because of his Baha'i faith, was a founding member of the CHRR, the Committee for Pursuit of the Right to Education for Baha'is Students and the Association Against Discrimination in Education. He was arrested in Esfahan on 2 March 2010 and transferred to Evin Prison, where he spent 65 days in detention, 25 of which he spent in solitary confinement. He was not allowed access to a lawyer while in detention and was beaten several times, prompting him to launch a hunger strike in protest at his ill-treatment. He was pressured by interrogators to deliver a "confession" in front of a video camera. After an unfair trial before Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on 20 December 2010 that lasted less than three hours, the court convicted him of "creating unease in the public mind" and "spreading propaganda against the system" because of his activities with the Association and CHRR, and sentenced him to 18 years' imprisonment. On 31 May 2011, however, he was released after making a large bail payment while he was awaiting the outcome of his appeal. Subsequently, his sentence was set at 12 years of imprisonment after the court reportedly applied "Islamic mercy". This sentence was confirmed on appeal. He was re-arrested again on 22 August 2012 when accompanying a group of activists who went to East Azerbaijan province to assist earthquake victims. According to Kaleme website, he was subsequently sentenced to five months imprisonment on the charges of "distributing mouldy bread" and "disobeying law enforcement officials".¹⁷⁵ He is held at Raja'i Shahr Prison.

Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Omid Kokabee, a physicist who is a member of Iran's Turkmen minority, has been imprisoned since 30 January 2011. He had been pursuing doctoral studies in the US at the University of Texas when he travelled to Iran to visit his family in early January 2011 during a university break. When he tried to return to his US university on 30 January 2011, security officials arrested him at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport. Fifteen months later, on 13 May 2012, he went on trial, on the charge of "contact with hostile countries". He appeared together with 12 others in a televised trial that Iranian state media dubbed "the trial of those accused of cooperation with



Physicist Omid Kokabee is imprisoned on account of his refusal to undertake work for Iran's military and intelligence services and on spurious charges related to his legitimate involvement in academic activities outside Iran. ©Private

Mossad in Israel". This trial was grossly unfair: he was not permitted to speak to his lawyer prior to the start of the trial and although the prosecution presented no evidence against him, the court convicted him of having "connections with a hostile government", sentencing him to 10 years in prison. The sentence was confirmed on appeal in August 2012. According to Kaleme, a Persian-language online news website, he was sentenced to a further 91 days' imprisonment by Branch 1057 of Tehran's General Court after it convicted him of receiving "illicit payments"—namely, grants that he had been awarded by the University of Texas to help meet the costs of his studies there.

Omid Kokabee wrote a letter from prison to the Head of the Judiciary in July 2011. In this, he alleged that while in pre-trial detention interrogators had coerced him into making false "confessions"; however, no investigation is known to have been ordered by the Head of the Judiciary. In a subsequent letter in November 2011, Omid Kokabee said that his interrogators had appeared intent on recruiting him to work on military and intelligence projects. "My only fault is that my studies are unique and there is nobody in Iran with such expertise and knowledge in this field," he wrote, adding "Unfortunately, it appears that this specialization is extremely demanded in Iran."¹⁷⁶

Amnesty International considers Omid Kokabee to be a prisoner of conscience imprisoned on account of his refusal to undertake work for Iran's military and intelligence services and on spurious charges related to his legitimate involvement in academic activities outside Iran. Amnesty International calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Leva Khanjani, a member of the Baha'i religious minority who was banned by the authorities from pursuing higher education due to her faith, began serving a two-year sentence in Evin Prison on 25 August 2012. A Revolutionary Court had convicted her on charges of "gathering and colluding with intent to harm state security", "spreading propaganda against the system" and "disturbing public order" for her alleged participation in anti-government demonstrations at the time of the Ashoura religious festival in December 2009. She was allowed temporary leave from Evin Prison on 10 July 2013 but returned to Evin Prison in December 2013 to serve the remainder of her sentence.

Majid Dorri, a member of ACRE, was arrested in July 2009 in Qazvin, northern Iran. He was held in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison for three months before being transferred to the general ward in the same prison's Section 350.

In December 2009, Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted him on charges of "acting against national security through participating in illegal gatherings", "enmity against God through having links with People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran" and "spreading propaganda against the system." The court sentenced him to a total of 11 years in prison, five of which were to be served in internal exile, but this was reduced on appeal, in May 2010, to six years' imprisonment – five of them to be served in internal exile – when his conviction on the first charge was overturned.

At the end of July 2010, Majid Dorri went on hunger strike in protest after he and other political prisoners were placed in solitary confinement in Section 240 of Evin Prison after they protested against what they saw as the "insulting behaviour" towards them of the prison authorities. However, in October 2010, he was transferred to Behbahan Prison in Khuzestan

province to serve the remaining part of his sentence in internal exile.

In May 2011, Majid Dorri and 25 other political prisoners co-signed a formal letter of complaint that they addressed to the official Central Supervisory Board on the Implementation of the Law on Respect for Legitimate Freedoms and Safeguarding Citizens' Rights. In the letter, they described their torture and ill-treatment by Ministry of Intelligence officials and Revolutionary Guards at the time of their arrest and during their subsequent detentions and interrogations:

"We, the signatories of this complaint, have been tortured. One of the most usual forms of torture that we have been subjected to has been detention in small solitary confinement cells; a method that has been acknowledged by the highest officials of the country to constitute torture. Interrogators and prison guards confirm that the accused suffer serious psychological and physical complications after a few weeks in solitary confinement. More severe forms of torture that some of us have been subjected to include methods such as pushing the head into the toilet and being forced to eat the interrogation papers...the interrogators subject the accused to such pressures not for obtaining the truth but in order to force the accused to confess to false accusations and whatever the interrogators want."¹⁷⁷



Demonstration at the University of Tehran on Iran national Student Day. Slogans on the placards say "Section 209 of Evin Prison; the house of those who demand freedom" and "Education is not my share, it is my right". ©Islamic Student Association of Amir Kabir University

It is not known what action, if any, the Central Supervisory Board has taken in response to the prisoners' letter of complaint. Allameh Tabataba'i University, where Majid Dorri had been studying Persian literature, expelled him in July 2011. The same university's Disciplinary Committee had previously barred him for four semesters on account of his activities before his arrest in July 2009.

Maryam Shafi' Pour, a postgraduate student at Imam Khomeini University in Qazvin who was a member of the women's committee supporting Mehdi Karroubi's 2009 electoral campaign, has been imprisoned since 27 July 2013. She was arrested when she obeyed a summons to appear at the Shahid Moghaddas Office of the Prosecutor located in Evin Prison. She was detained and held in solitary confinement in Section 209 of the prison for 64 days, during which she was denied access to a lawyer. Then she was moved to the general ward of Evin Prison. On 16 September 2013, the authorities transferred her to a hospital outside Evin Prison but refused to say why or inform her parents, who had gone to prison to visit her, to

which hospital they had taken her.¹⁷⁸ Maryam Shafi' Pour appeared before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on 21 October 2013, apparently charged with having contact with members of the family of the detained opposition leader, Mehdi Karroubi. On 2 March 2014, the Revolutionary Court of Tehran found her guilty of "spreading propaganda against the system", "assembly and collusion against national security", and "membership of the Advocacy Council for the Right to Education", which is not officially recognized by the Iranian authorities. Subsequently, she was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. As a result of her recent conviction, she will probably be required to serve a one year prison term that she incurred when a Revolutionary Court in Qazvin convicted her in 2010 in a separate case relating to her student activism but which the Qazvin court suspended in addition to the new sentence that Tehran court imposed on her. In April 2013, she remained in detention awaiting the outcome of her appeal.

Amnesty International considers her a prisoner of conscience and calls for her immediate and unconditional release.



Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, blogger and prisoner of conscience, is serving a 15-year prison sentence on charges including "spreading propaganda against the system" and "insulting the Leader and the President". ©Private

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, a "starred" student from Azad University in Arak and an active blogger, was arrested on 13 December 2009 in connection with the post-election protests. He then spent many months detained in solitary confinement within Section 2A of Evin Prison, where he was tortured and otherwise ill-treated. In 2010, a Revolutionary Court sentenced him to 15 years in prison after convicting him on charges that included "membership of the [illegal] internet group 'Iran Proxy'", "spreading propaganda against the system" and "insulting the Leader and the President", apparently in connection with his peaceful activities including writing his blog. His trial was grossly unfair. He was denied access to his defence lawyer and when he told the

court that he had been tortured in pre-trial detention, the trial judge reportedly retorted that he "deserved it" and failed to order an investigation.

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki was released from prison on bail on 2 July 2012 and resumed his blog three days later, writing, "After 32 months of not writing on my blog, I have come today . . . pen in hand and write to say that I am feeling well because my mother's face is fresh [with happiness] and she does not cry". However, security forces re-arrested him on 22 August 2012 when he and other human rights activists went to East Azerbaijan to assist at a relief camp for earthquake victims. He was taken first to Section 1 of Tabriz Prison, then moved to Evin Prison in Tehran to face a charge of "distributing unclean and non-hygienic goods." At Evin Prison, authorities did not allow him to take the regular medication he needs for a serious kidney ailment. He was released, however, on 6 November 2012 after paying

bail. He has had several kidney operations and requires continuous medication. After his return to Evin Prison on 21 May 2013, he was not allowed to take his prescribed medicine. According to Kaleme website, he was subsequently sentenced to five months imprisonment on the charges of “distributing mouldy bread” and “disobeying law enforcement officials”.¹⁷⁹

Amnesty International considers Hossein Ronaghi Maleki to be a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Mehdi Khoda'i, student at Azad University in Shahr-e Rey and a member of the Human Rights Activists in Iran, is serving a seven year prison sentence in Evin Prison. He was arrested on March 2010, apparently by Revolutionary Guards,¹⁸⁰ and then held in solitary confinement for several months in Section 2A, the section of the prison controlled by the Revolutionary Guards. He was tried in August 2010 by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, which convicted him on charges of “acting against national security through membership of the Human Rights Activists in Iran” and “spreading propaganda against the system.” The court sentenced him to three years’ imprisonment. He had already been sentenced to four years in prison by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court imposed in 2009 after it convicted him of “acting against national security through participating in illegal gatherings” in relation to his student activism prior to his arrest in 2007. Both sentences, a total of seven years, were upheld in December 2010.

Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Ighan Shahidi, a Baha'i student who has actively advocated for the right to education, is serving a five year prison sentence at Raja' Shahr Prison, north-west of Tehran. He was arrested on 2 March 2010 with two other activists in Kermanshah, western Iran, and held until the following May, when he was released on bail. In June 2011, Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court In Tehran imposed a five year prison sentence after convicting him on charges that included “spreading propaganda against the system”, “membership of the illegal group of the Committee for the Right To Education”,¹⁸¹ and “membership of the Baha'i community”.¹⁸² Branch 54 of the Court of Appeal subsequently confirmed the sentence.

Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Emad Bahavar, the head of the Youth Wing of the Freedom Movement Party who was a member of Mir Hossein Mousavi's 2009 presidential election campaign team, is serving a seven-year prison sentence. He was initially sentenced to a 10-year prison term after a Revolutionary Court convicted him in December 2010 on charges of “membership in the Freedom Movement Organization”, “gathering and colluding with intent to harm national security”, “spreading propaganda against the system” and “insulting the Supreme Leader”. The court also banned him from all media and political activities for 10 years.¹⁸³ In August 2013, however, the Supreme Court set aside his 10-year sentence and returned it to a lower court for re-examination, following which Branch 36 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran reduced the prison term from 10 to seven years in November 2013 while reconfirming the 10-year ban on his participation in media and political activities.¹⁸⁴ He is currently serving

his sentence at Evin Prison.

Hamed Rouhinejad, a student at Shahid Beheshti University, is now serving a 10-year prison sentence in Zanjan Prison. Ministry of Intelligence officials arrested him in May 2009 and then detained him for 40 days in Section 209 of Evin Prison. During the grossly unfair “show trials” that followed the post-election protests of 2009, he was convicted of having “links with the Kingdom Assembly of Iran (Anjoman-e Padeshahi Iran)”¹⁸⁵ and sentenced to death; however, after an appeal this was reduced to a 10 year prison term in January 2010.¹⁸⁶ He suffers from multiple sclerosis and is reported to be in deteriorating health, with impaired vision, due to his prison conditions.¹⁸⁷

Hassan Asadi Zeidabadi, a member of the Central Council of the Graduates’ Association of the OCU and the head of its Human Rights Committee, is serving a five year sentence in Section 350 of Evin Prison. He was arrested on 3 November 2009 and tried before Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on 3 August 2010. The court convicted him on charges of “gathering and colluding against national security”, “spreading propaganda against the system”, “participating in illegal gatherings”, and “disturbing the public opinion”.¹⁸⁸

Ali Akbar Mohammad-Zadeh, a student at Sharif University and the secretary-general of its ISA, is serving a six-year prison sentence imposed by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran when it convicted him of “spreading propaganda against the system” and “gathering and colluding against national security” in September 2011. Following his arrest on 11 February 2011, the day after popular demonstrations were held in Iran in solidarity with protestors engaged in the uprisings then in progress in Tunisia and Egypt, he was held in solitary confinement for 54 days and reportedly subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.¹⁸⁹

Amir Garshasbi, a student activist and member of ISA at the Industrial University of Shiraz, is serving a three-year sentence in Section 350 of Evin Prison. This was imposed by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran after it convicted him of “gathering and colluding against national security” following his arrest when mass demonstrations were held at the time of the Ashoura religious festival in December 2009.¹⁹⁰

Yashar Darolshafa, a University of Tehran student, is serving a prison sentence of five and a half years at Evin Prison, reduced on appeal from seven years. His sentence was imposed in August 2010 by a Revolutionary Court that convicted him on charges of “gathering and colluding against national security” and “insulting the President”. He was first arrested on 4 November 2009 and detained for 20 days at Evin Prison, then released but rearrested in February 2010 together with six members of his family; all six were released by mid-March 2010.¹⁹¹

Mostafa Nili, a former member of the Reformist Students Association and student at Qazvin University who was part of Mehdi Karroubi’s 2009 presidential election campaign team, is serving a sentence of three and a half years’ imprisonment at Raja’ Shahr Prison. He was arrested and tried in connection with the anti-government protests that broke out after the 2009 presidential election.¹⁹²

Habibollah Latifi, an industrial engineering student at Ilam University, has been held under sentence of death since 3 July 2008, when the Sanandaj Revolutionary Court convicted him of “*moharebeh*” (enmity against God). Despite his denial, the court convicted him of involvement in attacks in Sanandaj city in Kordestan allegedly carried out by members of the Kurdish Independent Life Party (PJAK), a proscribed armed group. He was denied legal representation at his trial, which took place behind closed doors and was grossly unfair. His death sentence has twice been confirmed, most recently in May 2011,¹⁹³ and his execution has been scheduled but postponed several times. In March 2014, he was held at Sanandaj Prison awaiting execution.¹⁹⁴

UNFAIR TRIALS

Many student defendants have been tried before unfair Revolutionary Courts, which are used to try cases involving alleged offences against national security or under the Anti-Narcotics Law. A single judge, sitting alone, presides. Trials before Revolutionary Courts fall far short of international fair trial standards. Cases involving alleged security offences are frequently held behind closed doors, with public and press excluded, as the Code of Criminal Procedures permits. In other cases, Revolutionary Courts have been used to hold “show trials” when the authorities have wished to promote a particular narrative publicly, as in late 2009 when state media were permitted access to the Revolutionary Court to film alleged protest organizers “confessing” their guilt.

In practice, defendants on trial before Revolutionary Courts are denied access to lawyers during their detention and pre-trial investigation, when they are often tortured and otherwise ill-treated while being interrogated. They may even be denied access to their lawyers during their trial. This is done using a restrictive interpretation of a note additional to Article 128 of the Code of Criminal Procedures, which empowers judges to exclude defence lawyers in cases involving matters or alleged offences against national security and those that could “offend public sentiment”.¹⁹⁵ Many defendants have told Amnesty International that authorities informed them that if they did not engage a defence lawyer, “it would be better” for them.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has declared Iran’s Revolutionary Courts to be “special courts” that have no justification and has recommended their abolition.¹⁹⁶ Many Revolutionary Court trials have been concluded within a matter of minutes, even when defence lawyers have been present in court. Many defence lawyers have told Amnesty International that the authorities denied them access to the case file containing the prosecution evidence against the defendant until the start of the trial, allowing them insufficient time to prepare the defence. Prosecutors generally rely on “confessions” and other statements obtained from defendants when they were held incommunicado in pre-trial detention, and which defendants allege were extracted under torture or other coercion. Courts generally accept such contested “confessions” and other self-incriminating statements of defendants without taking any steps to investigate defendants’ torture allegations or to ensure that the statements were freely given.

Former prisoners who were tried and sentenced by Revolutionary Courts have told Amnesty International that judges were not independent and appeared to take instruction or direction from intelligence or other security officials. Some said that interrogators told them even before they went on trial what their sentences would be, and they then duly received those sentences from the Revolutionary Court, suggesting that the outcome was predetermined even before they went to trial.

Other student activists who were jailed during President Ahmadinejad’s second term of office but have since been freed, include those listed below.

Saeed Jalalifar, a “starred student” who studied at Zanjan University who is also a member of the CHRR,¹⁹⁷ was arrested on 30 November 2009, apparently by Ministry of Intelligence officials. He was held in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison for several months and denied access to a lawyer. He was released on bail in March 2010 but re-arrested on 31 July 2011 after a court changed his bail order to a detention order. In August 2011, Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted him on charges of “spreading propaganda against the system through membership of the Committee of Human Rights Reports” and “gathering and colluding against national security.” The court sentenced him to three years in prison. He was released from Evin Prison in February 2014.

Mohammad Pour Abdollah,¹⁹⁸ a student at the University of Tehran and a blogger, was arrested on 12 February 2009 and tried before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court on four charges. The court cleared him of forming and belonging to “an opposition group” a reference to some left-leaning groups at university, but convicted him of “spreading propaganda against the system” and “gathering and colluding” against national security, for which he received six years of imprisonment. However, this was reduced to three years at appeal and he was released under an amnesty in 2011. He then left Iran and went into exile abroad in March 2012.



Mohammad Pour Abdollah, student at the University of Tehran, was arrested in February 2009 and sentenced to six years’ imprisonment, reduced to three years on appeal, after being convicted on vague charges that included “spreading propaganda against the system”. ©Private

Shabnam Madadzadeh, a student at Teacher Training University who was the vice secretary of the Tehran branch of the OCU, was arrested on 21 February 2009 and charged with “enmity against God”. She was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment in internal exile. She appears to have been convicted on account of her

family connections

with members of the PMOI in Iraq. She was released on 21 January 2014 after serving her prison term.



Milad Hosseini Keshtan was sentenced to six months imprisonment after attending a demonstration against Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s re-election in June 2009. He was summoned to the university’s Disciplinary Committee several times on account of his student activism. ©Private

Milad Hosseini Keshtan,¹⁹⁹ a student activist at Mazandaran University, was arrested on 16 June 2009 at the university’s campus together with 12 other male students after a demonstration against President Ahmadinejad’s re-election. They were taken to a nearby police station where he says he and others were beaten and one detainee was threatened with rape. They were then moved to Mati Kola Prison after a court authorized their detention; he was held incommunicado and repeatedly interrogated over two weeks before being released on

bail. Subsequently, Branch 101 of the General Court in Babolsar sentenced him to six months imprisonment and a flogging of 15 lashes after convicting him of “disturbing the public order of university through gatherings” in a brief and perfunctory hearing. He left the country and went into exile abroad after he was summoned to serve his prison term in 2011.

Mohsen Sanatipour, a former student at Ferdowsi University in Mashhad, became secretary-general of the Democratic Fraction student organization and a contributor to the *Kian-e Emrouz* journal until the authorities closed it down after its second issue criticized the policy of “starring” students. He also worked on other student publications that the authorities shut down. He was repeatedly summoned for questioning by Ministry of Intelligence officials but participated in a five-day protest by Ferdowsi University students after the official result of the 2009 election was announced. He told Amnesty International:

“During these demonstrations the Intelligence of the Revolutionary Guards called my parents a couple of times threatening them in order to stop me from attending the demonstrations. They contacted me as well threatening that they would arrest me, ban me from continuing my studies and reopen my case [on charges of “disturbing public opinion” for the article published in my publication which had stayed in the investigation phase in the Office of the Prosecutor] in the Revolutionary Court if I did not leave the demonstrations.”



Mohsen Sanatipour was held in solitary confinement and sentenced to 18 months in prison for charges including “disturbing the public order of the university” by forming a student organization.
©Private

In September 2009, Ministry of Intelligence officials arrested him and detained him in solitary confinement at their prison in Mashhad for 15 days. They questioned him, then bailed him to appear before the Revolutionary Court. In November 2011, the court sentenced him to 18 months in prison for allegedly “disturbing public opinion” in speeches and other statements after the 2009 election, “disturbing the public order of the university” by organizing the Democratic Fraction; and “spreading propaganda against the system” for publicly criticizing the Supreme Leader. His sentence was reduced by a third, on appeal two months later, but he was expelled by his university. He left the country after he received a summons in January 2012 to serve his prison

sentence.

Tara Sepehrifar, a student activist at Sharif University in Tehran, was repeatedly summoned for interrogation by Ministry of Intelligence officials after she was involved in the protests that followed the 2009 election. After students protested against a planned visit of the Minister of Science to Sharif University, she was called before the university’s Disciplinary Committee and later required to appear before the Revolutionary Court to face charges of “participating in illegal gatherings at university” and “spreading lies”. Ministry of Intelligence officials repeatedly called her in for interrogations lasting several hours before arresting her at her home on 10 February 2010 and took her to Section 209 of Evin Prison. There, she spent a week in solitary confinement before “the serious interrogations” started. These continued for almost a month during which, she told Amnesty International, she was put “under a lot of

pressure to ‘confess’” during interrogation sessions that lasted up to 10 or 12 hours but did not involve physical torture.²⁰⁰

She was eventually released on bail and then left Iran. She learned later that Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran had sentenced her to eight years in prison and a flogging of 148 lashes after trying her in absentia and convicting her of “spreading propaganda against the system”, and “gathering and colluding with intent to harm national security” and “disturbing the public order”.

Omid Pour Mohammad Ali, was expelled from Yazd University in 2008 on account of his student activism. He then joined the National Trust Party and took part in campaigning in support of Mehdi Karroubi’s bid for the presidency in the 2009 elections. In December 2009, he was arrested in Yazd, detained by Revolutionary Guards and taken to Section 2A of Evin Prison. He told Amnesty International that he was held in a small cell for 72 days, kept in solitary confinement for all but the last few days, subjected to prolonged interrogation, slapped and threatened by security officials, and that his family were also made to suffer. He said:

“They were constantly threatening me with torture and execution. They were calling my family, telling them that I was dead and that they should go and collect my body. My sister wanted to commit suicide. My mother had a heart attack and was hospitalized for three days. My family endured more pressure than I did.”



Omid Pour Mohammad Ali, was expelled from Yazd University, central Iran, in 2008, and imprisoned in Sections 2A and 350 of Tehran’s Evin Prison in 2009 and 2010 on account of his activism in Mehdi Karroubi’s election campaign. © Private

He was released on bail in February 2010. On 27 August 2010 Branch 26 of the Revolutionary²⁰¹ Court in Tehran sentenced him to a prison term of seven months and ten days months and a fine, after convicting him of “acting against national security”, “insulting the Supreme Leader”, and “insulting the President”. He started serving his sentence on 18 June 2011; he was released under an amnesty on 31 August 2011. Upon his release, he resumed his political activities but left the country after he was summoned by the Ministry of Intelligence.

Arash Sadeghi, a banned student from Allameh Tabataba’i University and a member of Mir Hossein Mousavi’s student team during the 2009 presidential campaign, was sentenced to six years’ imprisonment and 74 lashes by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in April 2010. The court convicted him on charges of “gathering and colluding against national security” and “spreading propaganda against the system”. He was acquitted of the latter charge on appeal, when his sentence was reduced to one year of imprisonment and a further

suspended sentence of four years of imprisonment. He was arrested on 27 December 2009 but was released in January 2010 after obtaining bail. He was then rearrested and bailed several times. In January 2012, he was rearrested again and held incommunicado until October 2013 when he was released on bail.

During an interview in November 2010 with Rooz Online News Agency, Arash Sadeghi said that he was tortured and ill-treated. He said he was hung from the ceiling by one leg and left hanging for up to five hours at a time, beaten so severely that his shoulder was dislocated twice and his teeth were broken, and suffered damage to his eardrum after interrogators repeatedly slapped him on the sides of his face. He alleged too that interrogators sought to degrade him by forcing him to lick a soiled toilet bowl, by urinating on his face and into his mouth, and by preventing him from bathing. He said interrogators kicked him and punched him in the face while he was blindfolded, harming his eyes and causing him temporary loss of vision, and threatened to have him tried on the charge of “*moharebeh*” (enmity against God), which could carry the death penalty. He said interrogators told him to “confess” in front of their film camera that he had links with the outlawed PMOI and others outside Iran, and threatened to arrest his mother and engineer his father’s dismissal from his post in the Iranian army when he refused.

As of March 2014, Arash Sadeghi was at liberty awaiting trial on the new charges of “gathering and colluding against national security” and “spreading propaganda against the system”.



Amir Rezaei, a student at Oroumieh University, was arrested in both November and December 2009. He was beaten and ill-treated in detention and later expelled from university. ©Private

Amir Rezaei, a student at Oroumieh University, told Amnesty International that he and a number of others arrested with him were beaten and otherwise ill-treated by security officials who detained them for two days in November 2009:²⁰²

“They blindfolded us and made us lie down in a van. They took us somewhere that looked like a mosque. They put us all in a room. Every couple of hours some men would enter the room and beat us using motorcycle chains. I was just praying that I would not get raped. This continued until morning. They did not give us anything to eat until noon. Then we were given some dried bread and yogurt. Then they continued sending some men inside to beat us every couple of hours. Once they were wearing martial art costumes.”

Amir Rezaei, speaking to Amnesty International on 18 March 2013.

He was arrested again on 27 December 2009 in Oroumieh following the anti-government protests at the time of the Ashoura religious festival. He was held by the Revolutionary Guards in solitary confinement for 25 or 26 days before being released after a judge ordered his “conditional acquittal.” He fled the country a couple of months after his release.

Mohammad Ghaffarian, an electrical engineering student at Ferdowsi University who had been arrested in February 2011, appeared before Branch 4 of the Revolutionary Court of Mashhad in August 2011. He told Amnesty International that he was denied a court appointed lawyer and that the court convicted and sentenced him after Ministry of Intelligence officials submitted a report to the judge which called for imposition of the maximum sentence.²⁰³

“I received my sentence in September. It was three years and six months in prison and flogging. I had four charges against me including ‘insulting the President’ which I had not been informed about at all in the court. I was told by my lawyer that they had possibly hacked my emails and found something there. I had a lawyer at the appeal stage. We appealed the sentence but [his conviction and sentence] was upheld nonetheless. After this I sent a request to the Supreme Court but my sentence did not change. I was summoned twice to serve my sentence. After my second summons, I fled the country.”

Saeed Aganji, a student at the Zarghan branch of Islamic Azad University, edited a student publication and formed a group, the Council of Shiraz, which issued statements and organized protests against the re-election of President Ahmadinejad without authorization from the university’s authorities. In December 2009, security officials arrested him two days before a planned protest on Student Day. After searching and removing items from his home, they took him to the Ministry of Intelligence in Shiraz for interrogation. There, he told Amnesty International he could hear someone being tortured in the next room as he was being questioned:

“My interrogator told me to continue writing down my answers and left the room. When he came back, he brought the man who was being tortured in the next room and started to beat him behind my chair.”



Saeed Aganji was arrested in December 2009, two days before a planned protest on national Student Day, and was held in solitary confinement for 40 days. ©Private

He was not physically tortured himself but he was held in solitary confinement for 40 days during which he was not allowed access to a lawyer. He was charged on 17 counts, including “founding an illegal group”, “spreading propaganda against the system”, and “participating in illegal gatherings,” and sent for trial before the Revolutionary Court in Shiraz. He received a three-year prison sentence but it was suspended. He left Iran following his release.²⁰⁴

Arjang Alipour, a student who was expelled from Shiraz University in 2011 (see above), said that he was arrested on 8 March 2011 in connection with charges laid against him after a demonstration the previous month.²⁰⁵ They included “spreading lies through giving interviews”, “disturbing public order through participation in demonstrations” and “insulting the authorities”. He told Amnesty International that he was held until 17 April 2011; for the

first three days, he was held in solitary confinement.

“After 15 days they brought a paper and I gave power of attorney to my lawyer. I was not allowed to see my lawyer until the court hearing. I had one court hearing in the Revolutionary Court and two court hearings in my absence in the General Court. They neither informed me nor informed my lawyer. After they gave a sentence they issued an arrest warrant.”

Arjang Alipour speaking to Amnesty International on 22 March 2013.

He was sentenced to flogging, imprisonment and a fine. This was reduced on appeal to a fine. He left Iran on 11 January 2012.

Rozhin Mohammadi, a blogger who was a student at a university in the Philippines, was arrested on 14 November 2011 when she arrived at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Airport. She was released the next day after paying bail. She was rearrested on 23 November 2011 and then detained for two weeks in Evin Prison. She told Amnesty International that she was taken to a building where she was placed in solitary confinement, blindfolded and interrogated:



Rozhin Mohammadi, a blogger and student at a university in the Philippines, was arrested and detained twice when she travelled back to Iran in November 2011. ©Private

“The first day of interrogations was the worst one. My first interrogator started by calling me a whore. He would beat me on my head and face whatever I answered him. ... [He] was saying that I had claimed that I had been raped by their soldiers. I said that I had never claimed that... He also threatened me with rape.

At one point, she said, her interrogators removed her blindfold and forced her to make a filmed “confession”:

“They made me say things that I had told them in my interrogations. They made me say that I had sex with certain people. This broke me. I started to cry.”

Security officials also brought in her brother, **Ramin Mohammadi**, while she remained detained. She heard him screaming as a result of torture and collapsed after seeing him and an interrogator told her: *“You should all be executed”*. When she saw her brother he was severely injured by torture, including hours of suspension by his arms, she said: *“His shoulders were dislocated, his nose was broken, his ear has been damaged, and he had bruises all over his body.”*

She fled the country along with her brother after they were released.

FLOGGING

In addition to prison terms, courts sentenced some students to floggings after convicting them on charges such as “insulting the Supreme Leader” and “insulting the President.” Judicial corporal punishments, including flogging, are prohibited by international law as they

violate the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Students subjected to flogging include:

Amir Chamani, a sociology graduate student of Islamic Azad University in Tabriz, began serving a nine month prison sentence in January 2013. In addition, Branch One of the Revolutionary Court in Tabriz sentenced him to a flogging of 40 lashes for “insulting” President Ahmadinejad. The flogging is reported to have been inflicted on him on 5 June 2013 at Tabriz Prison, where he was held. He was released on 3 October 2013 after serving his prison term.²⁰⁶

Payman Aref, a political science student at the University of Tehran and member of ACRE, received a flogging of 74 lashes prior to his release from a one year sentence for “insulting the President” in October 2010. Since then, security forces have detained him on at least two occasions and in April 2013 he was summoned to court to face a charge of “disturbing public opinion”, based on an interview he had given to the Kaleme news website linked with house arrested opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi. He was due to attend a court hearing before Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on 18 November 2013, but this was postponed.

Students imprisoned for their peaceful activities also include those active in campaigning for greater recognition of the rights of Iran’s ethnic minorities, including Kurds, and Azerbaijanis, as well as members of religious minorities, particularly Baha’is.

IMPRISONMENT OF ACADEMICS

Scores of university academics were among those arrested and imprisoned for engaging in peaceful protests or exercising their right to freedom of expression in other ways in the aftermath of the 2009 election, or on account of their religious or ethnic identity. Of these, many were still imprisoned as of March 2014. Those arrested had been employed at the universities of Tehran, Amir Kabir, Tarbiat Modares, Sharif, Tehran Medical Sciences, Mofid in Qom, Shiraz, Tabriz, International Imam Khomeini in Qazvin, Mazandaran and Bojnourd.²⁰⁷ Many of them were linked to reformist political groups.

Ali Asghar Khodayari, a lecturer at the University of Tehran and former Deputy Minister of Science under President Khatami, spent 57 days in detention in Sections 209 and 240 of Evin Prison after the June 2009 presidential election on a charge of “gathering and colluding against the national security by participating in illegal gatherings.”

Other academics sentenced to prison terms in connection with the protests that followed the 2009 presidential election included **Masoud Sepehr**, a lecturer in political science at the Azad University of Shiraz; **Ahmad Miri**, a lecturer at Babol University; and **Ghasem Sholeh Saadi**, lecturer in law at the University of Tehran, all of whom served 18 months in prison after courts convicted them of “insulting the Supreme Leader”.

Dr. Mohammad Maleki, 78, a former Chancellor of the University of Tehran, was arrested in August 2009 and detained for more than six months after he criticized the 2009 presidential election process and refused to vote. He was subsequently convicted on the charge of “spreading propaganda against the system” and sentenced to one year in prison. In January 2012, he was summoned to serve this term, although this had not been enforced by March 2014. Although he suffers from prostate cancer, he was questioned and banned from

travelling abroad after he wrote to the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, in September 2011 giving details of how he had been treated in detention.²⁰⁸ In February 2014, in an open letter to President Rouhani and security officials, he complained that the authorities continued to harass his family by confiscating the Bachelor of Arts certificate of his son, preventing him from taking his university exams, and repeatedly summoning members of the family for questioning.²⁰⁹

Davoud Soleymani, a University of Tehran lecturer who served as deputy campaign manager for Mir Hossein Mousavi, was sentenced to three years in prison, reduced on appeal from six, on the common catch-all charges of “spreading propaganda against the system” and “gathering and colluding against national security”.²¹⁰ In June 2010, he wrote an open letter to Ayatollah Khamenei in which he alleged that interrogators had beaten, insulted and coerced him into making “confessions” during his pre-trial detention.²¹¹ He was released from Raja’i Shahr Prison in May 2012 after serving his prison term.

University academics still imprisoned at the beginning of 2014 included the following:

Mohsen Mirdamadi, a University of Tehran lecturer, former member of the parliament and secretary-general of the Islamic Iran Participation Front. He was sentenced to imprisonment for six years by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in April 2010 after it convicted him on charges including “gathering and colluding against national security” and “spreading propaganda against the system.” The court also banned him from participating in political parties and media activities for 10 years. University of Tehran authorities expelled him from their staff in May 2013.

Abdollah Ramazanzadeh, a University of Tehran lecturer and Deputy Chairman of the Islamic Iran Participation Front who formerly acted as President Khatami’s official Spokesperson, is serving a five-year prison sentence, reduced on appeal from six years, on account of his peaceful political activities. He was convicted by a Revolutionary Court in Tehran on charges that included “spreading propaganda against the system.”

Alireza Beheshti Shirazi, a lecturer at Tarbiat Moddares University and advisor to Mir Hossein Mousavi, was sentenced to five years of imprisonment by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran after it convicted him on charges relating to his political activities.

Following the authorities’ crackdown on the BIHE’s staff in May 2011, tens of lecturers and collaborators at the institution were arrested. As of March 2014, 136 Baha’is²¹² are believed to be held in prisons across the country, including some who continued to serve prison terms arising from their involvement in the BIHE. They included:

Foad Moqqadam, a lecturer at BIHE who is serving a five year sentence at Raja’i Shahr Prison in Karaj. The sentence was imposed by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran.²¹³ He was arrested on 22 May 2011 in Esfahan.

Another BIHE lecturer, **Kayvan Rahimian**, is serving a sentence of five years’ imprisonment that he received in June 2012 after Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted him on charges that included “gathering and colluding against national security” and “membership of the Baha’i community”. On 7 October 2013, in a letter to his 13-year old daughter, he wrote:

“Over the past two years, you have repeatedly asked me ‘why have you been arrested? Why have you been sentenced to imprisonment? Are you criminals? What crime have you committed?’ During this time, I have tried to give you answers, sometimes explicitly and sometimes sugar coated. Now, on the anniversary of my imprisonment, I am writing this letter to provide some answers for your curious mind...One of the charges against us is ‘acting against national security through membership in the deviant Baha’i sect and the BIHE’ (as it is stated in our indictment). This means that we have been found guilty for believing in the Baha’i faith and teaching at the BIHE.”²¹⁴

Keyvan Rahimian’s brother, **Kamran Rahimian**, and the latter’s wife, **Faran Hesami**, both BIHE lecturers, are serving four-year prison sentences, at Raja’ Shahr Prison and Evin Prison respectively. They were arrested on 13 September 2011. In December 2011, Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted them on charges that included “gathering and colluding against national security” and “membership of the Baha’i community.”²¹⁵ The couple have a young son who is now in the care of other members of their family.

Kamran Mortezaie, a lecturer and administrator at BIHE, is serving a five-year prison sentence imposed on him by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in relation to his activities with the BIHE.

Nooshin Khadem, an administrator at BIHE at the time of her arrest in May 2011, is serving a four-year prison sentence in Evin Prison. This sentence was imposed by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran after it convicted her on a charge of “membership of an illegal group with intent to commit crimes against national security” in October 2011. Her sentence was confirmed on appeal on 19 January 2012.²¹⁶

Five of six men who were arrested at about the same time as Nooshin Khadem were also still serving prison terms at the beginning of 2014 on account of their Baha’i connections.

Mahmoud Badavam, a civil engineer and lecturer; **Riaz Sobhani**, a BIHE consultant; **Ramin Zibaie**, a director and lecturer in psychology; **Farhad Sedghi**, a lecturer, accountant and financial advisor; and **Shahin Negaria** BIHE graduate, were tried together with **Vahid Mahmoudi**, a BIHE’s director, before a Revolutionary Court in Tehran.²¹⁷ The court convicted them on the charge of “membership in the deviant Baha’i sect, with the goal of taking action against the security of the country, in order to further the aims of the deviant sect and those of organizations outside the country”, and imposed prison sentences of four and five years; these were confirmed in January 2012 but the five year term imposed on Vahid Mahmoudi was suspended, and he was released.²¹⁸

Nassim Bagheri was sentenced to four years in prison by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in October 2013 after it convicted her on the charge of “acting against national security through membership of the BIHE”.²¹⁹ She had been summoned to appear before the court together with nine others in March 2013, then released on bail.²²⁰

Danial Owji, who worked as a teaching assistant at BIHE, told Amnesty International²²¹ what happened to him when he was arrested together with other BIHE academics by security officials who raided their homes on 22 May 2011. In his case, security officials in plain

clothes stopped his car in the street, beat him, blindfolded him and forced him into the trunk of his own car before driving him to a building in which he was placed in a room known as the “exercise room”.

“They tied my hands behind my back to something and kicked and punched me. They handcuffed me and tied my feet with cuffs and suspended me. I was not able to stand on my feet when they brought me down... They broke my ribs. Once my interrogator got angry at me and burned my hand with his cigarette. They tied my feet together and pulled me up, suspending me upside down for a while... They asked me about people who were in charge of finance at BIHE.

“They wanted me to do a video-taped ‘confession’ and read out a text that they gave me. I first accepted. The text was a list of confessions against me but also against the BIHE staff. The text said that BIHE had links with Israel and that it was taking members to Iran in order to launch a ‘soft war’ against the system. After I read the letter, I told my interrogators that according to my beliefs I could not lie and that the ‘confession’ was full of lies.

“My interrogators were telling me that I would be executed... I was blindfolded and taken to a yard. Then someone read out a verdict [and] some verses of the Qu’ran and shouted God is great three times and fired into the air.”

Danial Owji, interviewed by Amnesty International on 11 April 2013.



Danial Owji, who worked at the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education (BIHE), was arrested, beaten, interrogated, and subjected to mock execution by security officials in May 2011 during the mass arrest of BIHE staff and educators.
©Private

Danial Owji was missing for four days after his arrest. His father later told him that when he asked Revolutionary Court officials if they knew what had become of him, they said Daniel Owji was dead and his father should collect his body from the morgue. In fact, following his torture, the authorities released Daniel Owji without charging him. He then left Iran.

Ramin Jahanbegloo,²²²an academic, writer and dual Iranian-Canadian citizen, was arrested at Tehran airport on 27 April 2006 as he was about to leave for an international conference on Iran. The Minister of Intelligence initially said he was held for having “contacts with foreigners”, but later accused him on 3 July 2006 of “taking part in a US-led velvet revolution” in Iran. Ramin Jahanbegloo was released on 30 August 2006 after four months in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Evin Prison, the first month of which he was held in incommunicado detention. He is now living abroad.²²³

In May 2007, an official of the Ministry of Intelligence warned that Iranian academics were subject to threats from foreign spy agencies through academic contacts. He warned them not to easily trust foreigners.²²⁴

On 8 May 2007, **Haleh Esfandiari**, a dual Iranian-US citizen and head of the Middle East programme at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC, was arrested and accused of spying, planning a soft overthrow of the government, and acting

against national security. She had travelled to Iran in December 2006 to visit her mother. She was released on 21 August on a heavy bail of 300 million tomans (then approximately US\$300,000) and left Iran.²²⁵

On 11 May 2007, **Kian Tajbakhsh**, a social scientist and urban planner who has joint US-Iranian citizenship, was arrested on the same charges laid against Haleh Esfandiari. He had worked for the Open Society Institute in the United States as a consultant, as well as a number of organizations and ministries within Iran. He was released on 19 September 2007 after paying substantial bail. On 18 July 2007, footage of the “confessions” of Haleh Esfandiari, Ramin Jahanbegloo and Kian Tajbakhsh were broadcast on Iranian television.

Kian Tajbakhsh was arrested again on 9 July 2009 after the presidential election. He subsequently appeared in a “show trial”²²⁶ in August and September 2009 accused of “espionage”, “co-operating with an enemy government”, and “acting against national security” by participating in Gulf 2000, an internet forum at Columbia University in the USA, and by working for the Open Society Institute, for which he had not worked since 2007.²²⁷ He was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment in October 2009.²²⁸ The prosecution produced no supporting evidence. He was released in March 2010. The lengthy prison term handed down, which was much longer than that given to most others who were tried alongside him appears to relate to his dual nationality and the nature of his academic work.

Since 2009, other academics have suffered a similar fate. For instance, **Dr. Kamiar Alaei** and his brother **Dr. Arash Alaei**, who are both experts in the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS who frequently travelled abroad to international conferences, were sentenced in January 2009 to three years and six years in prison respectively for “co-operating with an enemy government”. They spent months in pre-trial detention without access to a lawyer and faced an unfair trial in which secret evidence was produced which they were not allowed to see or challenge. Amnesty International believes their arrest was related to their links with foreign academics and civil society organizations, including in the USA. Both doctors are highly respected AIDS specialists who had not been politically active. They were released in 2010 and 2011 respectively.²²⁹

Dr. Rahman Ghahremanpour Bonab, Director of the Disarmament Research Group in the Centre for Strategic Research – a think-tank affiliated to the Expediency Council – was arrested on 1 June 2011 at around the same time as three Turkish academics who had travelled to Iran to attend a seminar entitled “Iran, Turkey and the Arab Spring”. The Turkish academics were released on 12 June, but Rahman Ghahremanpour Bonab remained in detention, apparently without charge or trial, for months. He had attended workshops organized by a Turkish professor on free and fair elections and had participated in a study group visiting the USA to observe the election.²³⁰ Local human rights activists have reported that he had been convicted of espionage and sentenced to three or three and a half years in prison plus a three-year suspended prison sentence.²³¹

In August 2007, a directive issued by an unidentified authority instructed the academic staff of some state universities in Tehran to notify the university’s security department of any visits abroad, including research opportunities, academic visits, and tourist and pilgrimage trips, financed by their own institute or by other institutes.²³² Almost immediately, **Hashem Aghajari**, a lecturer at Tarbiat Modares University, and **Abdollah Momeni**, spokesperson of the Graduates’ Association²³³ – an organization that is active on human rights issues – who were

bound for a conference at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA on the reform movement in Iran, were banned from travelling abroad. The semi-official Mehr News Agency said that they were scheduled to discuss the lessons of East European velvet revolutions.²³⁴

IMPUNITY

Iran's security forces, including Ministry of Intelligence officials, Revolutionary Guards and others, have tortured and otherwise ill-treated detainees in their custody over many years, and have done so with almost total impunity. Although many of the individuals whose cases are briefly described in this report alleged that they were tortured and subjected to other abuse in detention, the only known official investigations are those which occurred following the spate of deaths of detainees – including some with high level political connections – at Kahrizak detention centre in June-July 2009. Even that investigation was far from transparent and may not have been independent – it appears to have portrayed the abuse of detainees at Kahrizak as an aberration whereas, in practice, torture and other ill-treatment of detainees has long been the norm throughout Iran's prisons. Indeed, detainees who allege torture sometimes then face reprisals and can expect to receive no protection from the judiciary. Courts routinely ignore defendants' allegations of torture in pre-trial detention, without taking any steps to investigate them, and frequently rely on contested "confessions" – that defendants say were coerced – to convict those on trial before them and impose long prison sentences or even, in some cases, the death penalty. By routinely dismissing defendants' allegations of torture and failing to investigate them, the courts and the judiciary are effectively complicit in the use of torture.

The agencies responsible for carrying out arrests of students and other real and suspected critics and opponents of the government are shielded by an official lack of transparency regarding their operations, which fuels the cycle of torture and impunity. Iranian law requires that arrests are made only on the basis of a warrant that sets out the reason for arrest and which must be read to the accused, except when an individual is apprehended while in the act of committing a crime.²³⁵ In practice, however, this legal requirement to produce and read out arrest warrants is routinely ignored when those being detained are suspected of criticizing or opposing the government; in such cases, arrests are frequently carried out without any warrant or on the basis of a general arrest warrant that does not contain the name of the person being arrested or provide a specific reason for their arrest.

ACADEMIC PURGES

The Cultural Revolution that Ayatollah Khomeini launched in 1980 saw a significant exodus of academic teaching talent from Iran's universities during the almost three years while the Cultural Revolution Headquarters oversaw the revision of their teaching curricula to align them with the tenets of the Islamic Revolution. Some academics voted with their feet and took other jobs or went abroad because they disagreed with the policies of the new government or to further their careers in higher education, but others the authorities effectively purged on ideological grounds, especially academics who had been engaged in teaching humanities courses that were seen by the new authorities to "promote un-Islamic topics such as liberalism, neo-Marxism and secularism."²³⁶

According to one study, the authorities expelled a total of 2,628 employees from universities and other higher education institutions between 1981 and October 1983, of whom 873 were teaching staff.²³⁷ Abdolkarim Soroush, one of the seven members of the Cultural Revolution Headquarters at the time, interviewed in 1999, said that the official purge of staff had led to

the removal of around 700 academic staff out of a total complement of some 12,000.²³⁸

The combined effect of the purge and more voluntary departures saw the number of professors and academic staff fall dramatically between the time that the authorities closed the universities and their re-opening almost three years later. A study by the Cultural Studies and Research Institute of the University of Tehran, which was commissioned by the Prime Minister's office to assess the state of higher education in 1984-85, noted that many specialist staff had left Iran's universities and other institutions of higher education and had either left Iran or gone into retirement. It attributed their departure to a range of factors, such as the multiplicity of decision-making authorities affecting academics, undue interference by state institutions in academic administration, academics' declining social status and fears that they were perceived as agents of colonialism and universities as a source of corruption, job insecurity and state interference in how they should dress. As well, some had been exposed to accusations, insults, beatings and official purges.²³⁹ Despite the shortage of university teaching staff caused by the Cultural Revolution the authorities have continued periodically to purge further academics from the higher education sector because they considered them "secular" or on account of their political opinions. This has been done both through outright dismissals and by forcing others, particularly some with high reputations and academic status, to retire before they intended to do so. In 1994, for example, authorities dismissed two professors from the University of Tehran's School of Law and Political Science, **Dr. Javad Tabatabaei** the School's deputy dean, and **Dr. Jalil Roshandel** without giving any reasons.²⁴⁰ The same university dismissed 45 other academic staff between 1997 and 2005, all or mostly on ideological grounds, while 279 other academic staff retired from their positions at the university between 1998 and 2005, including some who the authorities forced to retire.²⁴¹

After Mahmoud Ahmadinejad became president in 2005, the authorities redoubled their efforts to "cleanse" the universities of "secular" academics and students, in accordance with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei August 2009 call for renewed "Islamicization" of the universities.²⁴² By the end of 2006, the University of Tehran had removed some 40 professors, mostly from the School of Law and Political Science, on the grounds that they had reached the statutory retirement age, 65, although other academics were allowed to continue teaching beyond that age²⁴³. The then chancellor of the university, Ayatollah Abbas-Ali Amid-Zanjani, declared that the academics were ordered to retire in order to address their "physical, thought and life problems,"²⁴⁴ but reportedly said later that he had been "deceived" into supporting their forced retirement.²⁴⁵

Elsewhere, authorities at Allameh Tabataba'i University in Tehran dismissed Dr Hassan Namakdoost Tehrani from the Communications School in 2005.

In 2007, University of Tehran authorities expelled three more academics from the School of Law and Political Science – **Dr Hossein Bashiriyeh**, a leading political theorist and advocate of democratic reform, **Hadi Semati**, a political scientist and expert in international relations,²⁴⁶ and **Behzad Shahandeh**, a China expert who they accused of "overstaying their research opportunity abroad" as visiting scholars at foreign universities. **Mohammad Dehqani**, a lecturer in the university's Literature School, was banned by university officials from teaching for allegedly "insulting the sanctities of Islam", "insulting Islamic Iranian dignitaries", "promoting ideas contrary to Islam and the holy Shari'a" and "propagating ideas

of deviant groups.”²⁴⁷Other leading academics retired from their academic posts, reportedly at the demand of the authorities.²⁴⁸ They included **Mohammad Mojtahed Shabestari**, a philosopher and liberal theologian within Shi’a Islam; and **Dr Hadi Alemzadeh**, an expert on Islamic history both in the university’s School of Theology and Islamic Knowledge; **Ahmad Sa’ei**, a specialist on the developing world; the dean of the School of Law and Political Science, **Hassan-Ali Doroodian**, and **Reza Raees Toosi**, a specialist on petroleum and the economy within the same School; and **Seyyed Ali Azemayesh**, a criminologist and expert on penal law.

At Allameh Tabataba’i University in Tehran, authorities were reported to have dismissed 15 professors in 2007 while in December 2007 authorities at the Iran University of Science and Technology listed 53 academic staff who they required to retire.²⁴⁹ At Tarbiat Modares University too, authorities removed from their teaching positions, dismissed or forced into retirement academic staff who were associated with “reformist” politics. One, **Sa’eed Hajjarian**, was accused of preparing the way for a Ukrainian-style “orange revolution” by the political office of the Revolutionary Guards (later, a court sentenced him to a suspended prison term for involvement in the protests that followed the 2009 presidential election.)²⁵⁰Others forced out of Tarbiat Modares University included **Mohsen Kadivar**, **Abolfazl Shakoori**, **Hashem Aghajari** and **Hatam Qaderi**. In 2008, authorities at Kashan University dismissed **Ahmad Eslami**, a social scientist who had previously written for reformist newspapers.

The authorities also cracked down on ethnic minority academics. In January 2007, the Kurdistan human rights news agency reported that a secret circular letter issued by the authorities had ordered the expulsion or forced retirement of 41 academics from the Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences in Kordestan. Those targeted included both male and female teaching staff who were members of the Kurdish Sunni minority. They included **Dr Mohammad Naqshbandi**, **Dr Manouchehr Rashidian**, **Mozaffar Firouzmanesh**, and **Houshang Zandi**.²⁵¹

The politically-motivated dismissal and enforced retirement of experienced academic staff had both an immediate and longer term impact on students and the quality of the higher education available to them. One, **Habib Farahzadi**, who was then a law student at the University of Tehran, told Amnesty International that when he returned after the summer recess to begin the new university year in September 2008 he found that academic staff who he had expected to teach some of his courses were no longer there. He said:

“I realized that the professors for these courses had been fired or, in the language of University officials, ‘retired’. All of these



Habib Farahzadi, a law graduate and activist at University of Tehran, was suspended twice from university as a result of his peaceful activism and imprisoned in Tehran’s Evin Prison before being released on bail. He fled Iran in May 2011. © Private

professors were either founders of new schools of thought or prominent figures in the discipline of law, in the context of Iran."²⁵²

He and other students held a peaceful sit-in protest against the removal of such experienced staff, for which they received a summons to appear before the university's Disciplinary Committee and written warnings as to their future conduct.

"After this experience I realized I cannot even express an opinion about my very own professor in the University," Habib Farahzadi said.

The authorities' purge of university academics seen as critics of the political and religious establishment intensified in the wake of the mass protests sparked by the June 2009 election. In that election, some "70 per cent of academics voted for someone who is not [Ahmadinejad]", said Hojatolislam Mohammad Mohammadian, Head of the Office of Representatives of the Supreme Leader in Universities, adding that this had caused the authorities "disappointment".²⁵³ The voting figures clearly reflected the degree of antipathy towards Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his government that had emerged across Iran's campuses during his first four years in office.

President Ahmadinejad's Ministry of Science sheared the universities of their authority to elect their own principals and to recruit their academic staff, transferring these powers to the Ministry, ostensibly as part of the thrust towards greater "Islamicization". As a result, the Ministry of Science was able to wield much greater control over the universities within its area of responsibility and to appoint its own nominees to lead them and to teach their students using political rather than strictly academic criteria.

By the end of 2009, authorities at the University of Tehran had dismissed or forcibly retired 81 staff since the beginning of the year and in 2010 they removed 40 more from their posts.²⁵⁴ Other academics found themselves barred or even physically prevented from offering courses or teaching while the authorities looked for "justifiable" grounds to dismiss them. Often, the precise reasons for the removal of individual academics remain unclear, and some may have been legitimate although, for the most part, it appears that staff were either dismissed or forced to retire because of their real or imputed opinions. Academics forced out of the University of Tehran in 2009 included **Dr Mohsen Rahami**, a former member of parliament with links to reformist groups who had acted as defence lawyer for students injured when the security forces raided student dormitories in July 1999, who was forced to retire from the School of Law and Political Science, and **Dr Tahmoures Bashiriyeh**, who was dismissed. In 2010, the university forced **Zahra Rahnvard**, former Dean of Al-Zahra University in Tehran, political activist and the wife of opposition presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, to relinquish her position as a member of the academic board of the Arts Faculty in October 2010 (she was placed under indefinite house arrest, together with her husband, in February 2011), and in March 2013 dismissed **Dr Seyed Hossein Seifzadeh**, a professor of international relations. A few months before his expulsion, he had reportedly been interrogated for a few hours by Ministry of Intelligence officials about the content of his classes in the Security Department of the university.²⁵⁵

At Allameh Tabataba'i University, the authorities removed **Dr Mohammad Reza Zia'ei Bigdeli**, an international law specialist, **Dr Hossein Sharifi Tarazkuhi**, who taught human rights, and

three other law school professors in 2009 by forcing them to retire. In a speech Mohammad Reza Zia'ei Bigdeli gave in the inauguration of the new dean of Allameh Tabataba'i University in September 2013, he stated that Sadreddin Shariati, the former dean of university, had forced him to retire and not to set foot in the university unless "the required coordination had been done with the relevant bodies".²⁵⁶ In 2010, the university officials took similar action to remove 12 academics from the university's School of Economics after 11 of the 12 wrote to the SCCR to voice concern that the once prestigious School was falling apart under what they described as the authoritarian and repressive policies of the university's chancellor, Hojatoleslam Sadreddin Shariati. Among other grievances, they said he had refused to pay academic staff, allowed surveillance cameras to be installed in teaching rooms, and already forced a third of the university's academic staff to leave while pressuring the rest to follow suit.²⁵⁷ In March 2010, the university dismissed **Morteza Mardiha**, a philosophy lecturer and reformist writer. In 2011, **Dr Mohammad Mohammadi Gorgani**, a former member of parliament and head of the university's department of Public Law and Human Rights, was forced to retire and authorities sacked **Mohammad Sharif**, a law lecturer who had helped co-found the Defenders of Human Rights Centre.

At Al-Zahra University in Tehran, authorities forced at least two academics who had supported Mir Hossein Mousavi's campaign for the presidency to retire in the months following the 2009 election, including **Fatemeh Rake'i**, a former member of parliament, and lecturer who publicly showed her support for Mir Hossein Mousavi. The other, **Abdollah Naseri**, who had previously headed the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), was detained later, in February 2011, and subsequently sentenced to five years imprisonment on a charge of "gathering and colluding against national security."²⁵⁸

At Tarbiat Modares University, authorities suspended former presidential candidate **Mir Hossein Mousavi** from his teaching post in February 2011 shortly after the government placed him under house arrest for calling for popular demonstrations in support of the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and other states in the region. Other academics close to him or who had acted as his advisors, including **Seyed Alireza Hosseini Beheshti**, a lecturer at Tarbiat Modares University, and **Qorbanali Behzadiannejad**, were among those detained by the security forces in connection with the 2009 protests. They received prison terms and were dismissed from their university posts.

At Sharif University of Technology, whose chancellor, Reza Roustazad, was appointed directly by the Minister of Science in 2010, authorities forced around 25 members of the academic staff to retire in October 2011, apparently in pursuit of greater "Islamicization". This action was criticized by Noorollah Haydari, a member of the Education and Research Committee of parliament, who claimed that the chancellor had exceeded his powers and breached the rules on retirement.²⁵⁹

In 2010 authorities at Shahid Beheshti University dismissed **Saba Vasefi**, a women's human rights activist who, for the previous four years, was a lecturer on Persian literature at the university. She told an interviewer in September 2012 that although she had received the next semester's agenda, the university authorities told her that she "did not have the 'competency' to enter the university" and had a driver take back the papers she had marked for the semester. "They told me that selection [*gozinesh*] based on one's beliefs is far more important than selection based on one's academic capabilities," she told the BBC. She said

she learnt of various criticisms that the university authorities had levelled against her, questioned her support for and adherence to strict Islamic principles:

“Among the criticisms I received from them was why no one had seen me in the university’s prayer room, why my wrists were showing when I was teaching in the classroom, why religious texts were not taught in my classes.”²⁶⁰

Ali Broki-Milan, a member of the Kurdish minority and lecturer on economy, reportedly was dismissed in 2012 from his lectureship at Hamedan University because of his views on Kurdish minority rights and his Kurdish identity.²⁶¹

The removal of ideologically suspect or dissident academic staff from universities was still continuing as Iran prepared for new presidential elections in 2013. In February 2013, authorities at the Islamic Azad University in Tehran, told five academic staff that they were banned from teaching, including **Ehsan Shariati** and **Mohammad Zaymaran**, both lecturers in Western philosophy. Ehsan Shariati had already been banned from teaching by the University of Tehran’s Selection Board²⁶² although he received no formal written explanation, being told only that having entered the election period the “universities should be calm”.²⁶³

In addition to academic staff, some university chancellors also appear to have fallen victim to government pressure to vacate their positions. **Professor Sa’eed Sohrabpour**²⁶⁴ departed from Sharif University of Technology saying that he had not resigned but had asked the Minister of Science to replace him because he needed rest,²⁶⁵ in an apparent bid to quash speculation that he had been forced out. **Professor Yousef Sobuti**,²⁶⁶ founder of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Basic Sciences in Zanjan, refused to disclose whether he had resigned or had been fired in an interview dated 21 August 2010, saying that it did not matter as the university would continue to operate as usual as it was the university’s academic board that essentially ran it.²⁶⁷ A week later, however, the semi-official Fars News agency commended the demise of his “20 years of autonomous administration” during which, it said, the “representative of the Supreme Leader had not been allowed to have an office in the University” and the university had provided “no prayer rooms or mosques”.²⁶⁸

By June 2013, only one of the 52 universities directly administered by the Ministry of Science – Sahand University of Technology in Tabriz – still had a chancellor whose appointment pre-dated President Ahmadinejad’s election in 2005. How many chancellors were forced from their positions by government pressure, however, and how many resigned or retired for unconnected reasons remained unclear.

As they forced out academics and university principals deemed antipathetic to the government or insufficiently “Islamic”, the authorities, led by the Ministry of Science, replaced them with less experienced and newly-qualified staff, utilizing the stringent selection criteria (*gozinesh*) used to filter applicants for jobs as state employees. At the end of 2012, a Ministry of Science official disclosed that 300 academics retired annually, with some told by the Ministry “apply for retirement or we will fire you”.²⁶⁹ The same official pointed out that 40,000 doctoral students remained on the jobs market awaiting recruitment, implying that those who retired could soon be replaced. Another official of the Ministry said that the Ministry had already recruited 7,000 new academic staff and aimed to increase that to 10,000 by May 2013, then recruit an additional 10,000 by September 2013.²⁷⁰

Some new staff appear to have been recruited at least partly because of their experience in the military or as members of the paramilitary Basij. In June 2012, the Academics Basij, comprising current and former members of the Basij in higher education, reportedly had branches in 322 universities and other institutions and over 11,000 members. In Esfahan, 1,300 of the province's 5,000 academics were active in the Academics Basij and that number was due to rise to 3,000 by March 2013.²⁷¹

In March 2011, **Ehsanollah Haydari**, a lawyer and full-time lecturer of criminal law and human rights at the Khorramabad branch of Islamic Azad University, was expelled from his post after 12 years for being a Dervish²⁷² and representing Dervishes of the Gonabadi order before the courts. University officials reportedly informed him that the Ministry of Intelligence had written to the university's central board of selection to disqualify him. Ehsanollah Haydari had been prevented from studying for a doctorate despite passing the relevant entrance exam in 2008.²⁷³

6. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

“Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education.”

Article 13 (2)(C) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Iran is party to several key international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). However, it has yet to become party to other major human rights treaties, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

The right to education for everyone and at all levels, without discrimination, is explicitly guaranteed under the international treaties that Iran has accepted or to which it is party, including the Convention against Discrimination in Education. Moreover, Iran is a member of UNESCO; consequently, Iran is obliged to take notice of UNESCO recommendations that have been formally adopted as international instruments by member states, including the 1997 Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel which is the only international instrument setting out norms and standards that relate exclusively to educators within universities and institutions of higher education.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Article 26 of the ICCPR asserts “All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

Under the ICERD, Iran has an obligation to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to “ensure that all public authorities and public institutions... act in conformity with this obligation”. Specifically, under Article 5(e)(v) Iran has undertaken to guarantee the

right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law in enjoyment of the right to education and training.

Article 13 (1) of the ICESCR guarantees the right of education for everyone, with state parties agreeing that it should be directed towards “the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups.” Specifically Article 13(2)(c) requires that higher education shall be made equally accessible to all. Article 2(2) of the ICESCR requires that all of the rights in the treaty, including education, shall be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Noting the vital role that education has in empowering women, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the independent body of experts that monitors the implementation of the ICESCR, emphasizes that state parties are required to ensure that education conforms to the aims and objectives identified in Article 13 (1), as interpreted in other recent international instruments such as the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) (Art. 1), the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (Part I, para. 33 and Part II, para. 80), and the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (para. 2) which include specific references to gender equality.²⁷⁴ In its Concluding Observations on Iran (10 June 2013), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed concern about discrimination against women and members of the Baha’i faith, including in accessing university education. It recommended that Iran “take steps to lift all restrictions on access to university education, including bans on female and male enrolment, limited quotas for women in certain fields, and gender segregation in classrooms and facilities.”²⁷⁵ The Committee also recommended that Iran “take steps to guarantee, in law and practice, the unhindered access of Baha’i students to universities and vocational training institutions, and to prevent refusals of access and expulsions of students from such institutions based on their belonging to the Baha’i community.”²⁷⁶

The right to education is also guaranteed under Article 28 of the CRC with Article 28(1)(c) requiring that higher education be made accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means. Article 29(d) of the CRC states that the:

“education of the child shall be directed to inter alia the preparation of the child for responsible life... in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups...”

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has reiterated that discrimination on the basis of any of the grounds listed in Article 2 of the Convention, whether it is overt or hidden, offends the human dignity of the child and is capable of undermining or even destroying the capacity of the child to benefit from educational opportunities. Specifically gender discrimination which limits the benefits girls can obtain from the educational opportunities offered or by unsafe or unfriendly environments which discourage girls’ participation is in direct contradiction with the requirements in Article 29 (1)(a) that education be directed to the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their

fullest potential.²⁷⁷

Article 4(a) of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education also requires that higher education be made equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity.

THE RIGHT TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Although the right to academic freedom is not explicitly guaranteed under the ICESCR, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has made clear in General Comment 13 on the Right to Education that the right can only be enjoyed if accompanied by the academic freedom of staff and students. In this respect, the Committee has gone on to emphasize that, in its experience, staff and students in higher education are especially vulnerable to political and other pressures which undermine academic freedom.²⁷⁸

The Committee defines academic freedom as including:

“the liberty of individuals to express freely opinions about the institution or system in which they work, to fulfil their functions without discrimination or fear of repression by the State or any other actor, to participate in professional or representative academic bodies, and to enjoy all the internationally recognized human rights applicable to other individuals in the same jurisdiction.”²⁷⁹

The Committee goes on to state that “enjoyment of academic freedom requires the autonomy of institutions of higher education ...[with a] degree of self-governance necessary for effective decision-making by institutions of higher education in relation to their academic work, standards, management and related activities.” This is to be balanced with public accountability. Whilst the Committee recognises that there is no single institutional model, arrangements should be fair, just and equitable, and as transparent and participatory as possible.²⁸⁰

The Committee has made clear that “the denial of academic freedom of staff and students” amounts to a violation of Article 13 of the Covenant.²⁸¹

UNESCO’s 1997 Policy Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel also provides that the right to education “can only be fully enjoyed in an atmosphere of academic freedom and autonomy for institutions of higher education”, whilst expressing concern regarding the “vulnerability of the academic community to untoward political pressures which could undermine academic freedom.”²⁸²

Academic freedom is defined as:

“the right without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom of carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express opinion[s], freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional and representative academic bodies... without discrimination of any kind and without fear of repression by the state or any other source.”

The Recommendation explicitly requires member states “to protect higher education institutions from threats to their autonomy coming from any source.”²⁸³

In so doing States must ensure that “[h]igher-education teaching personnel, like all other groups and individuals, should enjoy those internationally recognized civil, political, social and cultural rights applicable to all citizens. Therefore, all higher-education teaching personnel should enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, assembly and association as well as the right to liberty and security of the person and liberty of movement. They should not be hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as citizens, including the right to contribute to social change through freely expressing their opinion of state policies and of policies affecting higher education. They should not suffer any penalties simply because of the exercise of such rights. Higher-education teaching personnel should not be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention, nor to torture, nor to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. In cases of gross violation of their rights, higher-education teaching personnel should have the right to appeal to the relevant national, regional or international bodies such as the agencies of the United Nations, and organizations representing higher-education teaching personnel should extend full support in such cases.”²⁸⁴

This requires scrupulous observance of the principle of academic freedom: “Higher-education teaching personnel are entitled to the maintaining of academic freedom, that is to say, the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies. All higher-education teaching personnel should have the right to fulfil their functions without discrimination of any kind and without fear of repression by the state or any other source. Higher-education teaching personnel can effectively do justice to this principle if the environment in which they operate is conducive, which requires a democratic atmosphere; hence the challenge of developing a democratic society.”²⁸⁵

In this respect, the UNESCO Policy Recommendation further provides that professors should not be forced to instruct against their own best knowledge and conscience, to use curricula or methods contrary to international human rights standards, or be subject to dismissal for any reason without sufficient cause related to professional conduct and demonstrable before independent and impartial third party hearings.

According to these standards, both states and higher education institutions should support academic freedom and fundamental human rights, ensure students are treated fairly and justly, adopt policies that ensure equitable treatment of women and minorities, and ensure that higher education personnel are not impeded in their work by violence, intimidation or harassment.²⁸⁶

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION

Article 18 (1) of the ICCPR states that:

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is absolute. Generally speaking, freedom to manifest religion or belief, like freedom of expression, association and assembly may be subject to narrow restrictions where it touches on the protection of public safety and/or national security, health, morals or limitations to the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by others. The independent body of experts that monitors the implementation of this treaty, the UN Human Rights Committee, has said that such restrictions must be interpreted in a limited manner.

The Committee on ESCR, in General Comment 13 (on the right to education) observes: “staff and students in higher education are especially vulnerable to political and other pressures which undermine academic freedom”.²⁸⁷ These pressures relate to laws and practices that undermine the right of freedom of opinion, belief, expression, association and assembly in the wider society, not just in the world of academia.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by Article 19 of the ICCPR which states that “everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference” and that:

“everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice”.

Freedom of expression may only be restricted for respect of the rights or reputations of others, or for the protection of national security or of public order or of public health or morals and must conform to strict tests of necessity and proportionality.

Students and academics make great use of audiovisual material, including that which is posted on the internet. In its General Comment No. 34 on Article 19, issued in September 2011, the UN Human Rights Committee made it clear that freedom of expression applies to audiovisual material and the internet as well as to more traditional forms of communication, and includes:

“... expression and receipt of communications of every form of idea and opinion capable of transmission to others ... political discourse, commentary on one’s own and on public affairs, canvassing, discussion of human rights, journalism, cultural and artistic expression, teaching, and religious discourse.”²⁸⁸

The Committee also clarified that lawful restrictions on freedom of expression may never be invoked as “a justification for the muzzling of any advocacy of multi-party democracy, democratic tenets and human rights”.²⁸⁹

The Committee, which further highlighted the need for a plurality of media which should not be solely under state control, also warned that “treason” or “national security laws” may not be invoked “to suppress or withhold from the public information of legitimate public interest that does not harm national security or to prosecute journalists, researchers, environmental activists, human rights defenders, or others, for having disseminated such information”.²⁹⁰ It stressed that “all public figures, including those exercising the highest political authority such as heads of state and government, are legitimately subject to criticism and political opposition”.²⁹¹

Regarding the internet, the Committee stated that generic bans on the operation of certain sites and systems are not “permissible restrictions” and that no form of media should be shut down or prevented from publishing material solely on the basis that it may be critical of the government or the political social system espoused by the government.²⁹²

In his report on freedom of expression and the internet, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression also stated:

“Restrictions should never be applied, inter alia, to discussion of Government policies and political debate; reporting on human rights, Government activities and corruption in Government; engaging in election campaigns, peaceful demonstrations or political activities, including for peace or democracy; and expression of opinion and dissent, religion or belief, including by persons belonging to minorities or vulnerable groups.”²⁹³

As this and other reports published by Amnesty International, the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, and other organizations amply demonstrate, the Iranian authorities continue to severely restrict the right to freedom of expression in direct contravention of Iran’s obligations under the ICCPR and to penalise many Iranians who seek legitimately to exercise their right to freedom of expression, including by detaining and imprisoning them.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

The rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are guaranteed under Articles 21 and 22 of the ICCPR, respectively, and both rights are subject only to similar restrictions as may limit freedom of expression. Amnesty International believes that such limitations provide no basis for the Iranian authorities’ enforced closure of many student bodies and associations, including scores of ISAs.

In its concluding observations of November 2011, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern at wide-ranging restrictions on the rights to freedom of assembly and association and recommended that the Iranian authorities should ensure that these rights are guaranteed to all individuals without discrimination and release immediately and unconditionally anyone held solely for the peaceful exercise of this right, including students, teachers, human rights defenders (including women’s rights activists), lawyers and trade unionists. The Committee also said that the authorities in Iran should ensure the prompt, effective and impartial investigation of threats, harassment, and assault on members of these groups, and, when appropriate, prosecute perpetrators of such acts.²⁹⁴

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Arbitrary arrest is prohibited under Article 9(1) of the ICCPR. This provides:

“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.”

It also provides that anyone deprived of their liberty shall be promptly informed of the reasons for their arrest and shall have the right to challenge before a court the lawfulness of

their detention.

DUE PROCESS OF LAW AND FAIR TRIAL RIGHTS

Rights relating to due process in the administration of justice are also set out in the ICCPR. The experiences of the students and academics highlighted in this report show how these obligations are routinely flouted by Iranian security and judicial authorities. Article 9 of the ICCPR, requires the Iranian authorities to ensure that any person arrested is informed of the reason at the time of their arrest, promptly informed of any charges, brought before a judge and tried within a reasonable time or released. Detainees should be able to challenge the lawfulness of their detention and entitled to compensation if they are unlawfully held. Article 14 of the ICCPR requires that anyone charged with a criminal offence is presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law, is considered equal before the courts and is entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law in open session unless there are legitimate national security or other grounds that justify the court conducting some proceedings in closed session. The accused must be permitted adequate time and facilities to prepare their defence; to be represented by defence counsel of their own choosing; to be present at their trial; and to call and cross-examine witnesses; and to have the right to appeal the judgement before a higher court or tribunal.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is absolutely prohibited under Article 7 of the ICCPR and under customary international law. The Human Rights Committee has expressed its deep concern to Iran “about reports of the widespread use of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in detention facilities, particularly of those accused of national security-related crimes or tried in Revolutionary Courts, some of which have resulted in the death of the detainee. The Committee is also concerned that coerced confessions have been used as the primary evidence to obtain convictions in court. The HRC recommended that Iran “should ensure that an inquiry is opened in each case of alleged torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in detention facilities, and that the perpetrators of such acts are prosecuted and punished appropriately. It should ensure that effective reparation, including adequate compensation, is granted to every victim. The State party should also ensure that no one is coerced into testifying against themselves or others or to confess guilt and that no such ‘confession’ is accepted as evidence in court, except against a person accused of torture or other ill-treatment as evidence that the ‘confession’ or other statement was made.”²⁹⁵

RIGHT TO A REMEDY

The protection of the right to education and other relevant rights requires them to be subject to adjudication by appropriate accountability mechanisms, including courts. In practice, this means that judicial or quasi-judicial mechanisms can be utilised to ensure that people can claim their rights, including at an international level.²⁹⁶The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education recently stated that “Judicial systems play an essential role in protecting and enforcing the right to education as an entitlement. The enforcement of legal mechanisms guaranteeing equality of opportunity in education is crucial in safeguarding such entitlement. In the case of violation of the right to education and denial of equality of opportunity, everyone must be able to have recourse before courts or administrative tribunals on the basis of international legal obligations as well as to existing constitutional provisions on the right to

education.”²⁹⁷

More generally, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has made clear that a State party seeking to justify its failure to provide any domestic legal remedies for violations of economic, social and cultural rights, such as education, would need to show either that such remedies are not “appropriate means” within the terms of Article 2.1 of the Covenant²⁹⁸ or that, in view of the other means used, they are unnecessary. It will be difficult to show this and the Committee considers that, in many cases, the other “means” used could be rendered ineffective if they are not reinforced or complemented by judicial remedies.²⁹⁹

Many student activists and academics in Iran have faced politically motivated arrest, torture and other ill-treatment for alleged acts that are not recognizably criminal in international law, and other violations. Under international law, notably the ICCPR, Iran is required to provide a right to a remedy.³⁰⁰

The authorities must ensure that:

- anyone whose rights or freedoms are violated shall have an effective remedy, notwithstanding that the violation has been committed by people acting in an official capacity;
- anyone claiming such a remedy shall have this right determined by competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities, or by any other competent authority provided for by the state, and to develop the possibilities of judicial remedy; and that
- the competent authorities shall enforce such remedies when granted.

Regrettably, this has proven to be more an exception than the rule in Iran.

IRANIAN LAW

CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran contains many important safeguards of rights and freedoms that are guaranteed in the international instruments to which Iran is a state party, including those relating to freedom of expression and fair trial. These seek to ensure that all individuals enjoy equal rights under law, and the human dignity that follows from this.

There are, however, issues of particular concern to Amnesty International regarding the implementation of international human rights safeguards, including in connection with freedom of expression and association, non-discrimination and the administration of justice.

FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic contains articles that guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. The basis for individual freedom of thought and conscience is found in Article 23 of the Constitution. It states that “[t]he investigation of individuals’ beliefs is forbidden” and that “no one may be molested or taken to task simply for holding a certain belief”. Article 24 also provides for freedom of expression in press and

publications. However, in each case these guarantees are made subject to vague criteria which have the effect of severely undermining them and allowing the authorities wide discretion in their interpretation. Thus, while Article 24 guarantees freedom of expression, it makes exercise of this right subject to where it is not “in contravention with the basis of Islam or public order”.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

The Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of association in Article 26 but stipulates that associations “must not violate the criteria of Islam or the basis of the Islamic Republic”, while freedom of peaceful assembly is guaranteed under Article 27 so long as this is not “detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam”.

The main law restricting freedom of association and the right to assembly is the Law on Political Parties, Societies, Political and Guild Associations, and Islamic or Recognized Minority Religious Associations. Article 10 of this law requires the licensing of all organizations and associations by an official commission created under the law, and that all demonstrations and other public assemblies are authorized in advance by the authorities.

RIGHT TO NON-DISCRIMINATION

Despite the constitutional guarantees of equality³⁰¹, men and women are not treated equally under the law, and, in practice, sex discrimination is entrenched in Iran. Girls and women are not guaranteed equal protection of the law or equality before the law as required under Articles 14 and 26 of the ICCPR – for example, the age of majority is nine lunar years but 15 lunar years for boys. Consequently, girls can be tried on the same basis as an adult – including on charges that carry the death penalty – from an age of eight years and eight months, while boys become so liable when they reach 14 years and even months. Moreover, Iran permits early marriage of girls. In 2003, the law was amended to raise the age at which girls can marry to 13 years, although a father may seek permission from the courts to allow his daughter to marry if she has reached nine lunar years. Early marriage is itself a human rights violation and it also facilitates a range of other human rights violations.

Furthermore, in some instances, a woman’s testimony in court is worth only half that of a man’s; women receive only half the compensation of a man for bodily injury or death and women do not have equal status with men under many other areas of law, particularly those relating to marriage, divorce, custody of children and inheritance.

In some circumstances, non-Muslims are denied both equality before the law and equal protection under the law. For example, if a non-married non-Muslim man is convicted of having sexual relations with a non-married Muslim woman, the man would be sentenced to death, whereas a non-married Muslim man would face a sentence of flogging.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Article 12 of the Constitution states that the official religion of the country is Shi’a Islam but other minorities within Islam are free to practice their faith. According to this Article, the personal affairs of these minorities, such as marriage and divorce, should be regulated by their religious faith. Article 13 of the Constitution asserts that Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians are the only recognized religious minorities.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Article 169 of the Constitution and Article 2 of the Islamic Penal Code both state that no act or omission may be regarded as an offence, unless clearly regarded as an offence by law. However, under Article 167 of the Constitution, and Article 214 of the Code of Criminal Procedures, judges are required to use their knowledge of Islamic Law to rule in cases where no codified law exists. This means that people can be tried for actions or omissions which are not crimes under the codified law of the country, including some which can carry the death penalty. This introduces a dangerous layer of ambiguity into proceedings which should leave little or no room for ambiguity, particularly proceedings which might entail the ultimate sanction of the death penalty.

Despite the Constitutional and legal requirement for courts to conduct hearings in the presence of a defence lawyer, in practice many defendants are denied this right. In addition, under a note to Article 128 of the Code of Criminal Procedures, judges have the discretion to bar defendants' access to lawyers in "sensitive cases" – a practice which is in fact the norm. Thus, defendants are routinely barred from access to a lawyer during the investigative stage of their detention, which can be extended indefinitely. Amnesty International is aware of many cases where people have been detained for months in pre-trial detention with no access to a lawyer, and only limited access to family members. Their lawyers are only granted access to their clients' files once the investigation has been completed, which may be only days before a trial hearing is scheduled, although applications for delay may be made to allow more time for preparation.

Under Iran's prison regulations, detainees must be held in facilities controlled by the Prisons' Organization.³⁰² However, those arrested are often taken to detention facilities run by intelligence bodies such as the Ministry of Intelligence or the Revolutionary Guards' Intelligence Branch over which there is no judicial oversight. It is common for detainees to be held incommunicado for days, weeks or even months without any chance of challenging their detention. The detainees' desperate families are often denied any information by the authorities about the fate or whereabouts of their family members, in what amounts in many cases to the practice of enforced disappearance.

SAFEGUARDS AGAINST TORTURE

Iran's legal framework only provides limited protection from torture. Article 38 of the Constitution prohibits torture if it is "for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information." This definition falls far short of international standards. For instance, the definition of torture in the UN Convention Against Torture provides for a longer – but not exhaustive – list of purposes, including punishment, intimidation, discrimination and coercion.

Article 39 bans all affronts to the dignity of detained or imprisoned persons. Article 6 of the 2004 Law on Respect for Legitimate Freedoms and Safeguarding Citizens' Rights further provides that while a prisoner is being detained, interrogated or investigated, law enforcement officers must not harm an accused person, for example, by blindfolding them or tying their limbs.

The Iranian authorities have admitted that in order to obtain information or confessions, law enforcement officials are, in special cases, permitted to use interviewing and interrogation

techniques which may cause physical or mental pain or suffering when ordered to do so by a superior law enforcement official or other government official.³⁰³

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report details the persistent and deepening repression of students and academics in Iran's system of higher education.

The government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whose mandate ended in early August 2013, appeared determined to refashion higher education so that it only contains educators prepared to teach ideas approved by the authorities, only has students that do not express alternative ideas or engage in opposition or dissident activities, and who behave according to a strict dress and conduct code that has a disproportionate impact on women.

Since President Rouhani came to power in 2013, his government has espoused a more rights-respecting agenda raising hopes that his term in office may see significant – and much needed – improvements in human rights in Iran and in the quality of life for millions of Iranians. The priority that he attaches to addressing the crisis of academic freedom now pervading Iranian universities will be an important indicator of whether such hopes are well-founded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations address the issues that are described in this report.

TO THE IRANIAN AUTHORITIES

Amnesty International is calling on the Iranian authorities to end these entrenched human rights violations and to introduce the following measures without delay:

RIGHT TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

- Ensure that higher education is made equally accessible to all on the basis of ability and complies with the recommendations of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,³⁰⁴ and that employment in secondary and higher education should not be contingent on sex, political or religious affiliation, opinion or belief;
- Ensure that students and academics who exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association or peaceful assembly do not face reprisals such as disciplinary reviews or falsified failure of assessed work that can lead to their suspension, dismissal or expulsion; annul without delay all previous arbitrary suspensions and expulsions of students and all forced retirements or effective dismissals of academic staff carried out on prohibited grounds, and restore the victims of these measures their former positions as students or university staff;.
- Remove any element of direct oversight by national security bodies over universities and educational centres;
- Ensure that arbitrary restrictions on the formation and operation of student publications and associations are lifted, and that student publications and associations are not subject to closure on account of exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association or

assembly;

- Stop arbitrary interference in the right to privacy of students and academics and ensure that no one is denied access to higher education on account of their opinions or by reason of their gender, their religion, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation;
- Rescind policies aimed at limiting the participation of girls and women in higher education, including in respect to dress code requirements, and reopen courses closed to women for reasons of classification or quotas, as recommended in May 2013 by the UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights;³⁰⁵
- Ensure that all higher education institutions are required to incorporate international human rights standards into their founding instruments and to abide by these standards in practice, including by upholding and protecting the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly without discrimination on campus;
- Ensure that adequate resources are provided to ensure that people from traditionally marginalized or disadvantaged groups, such as members of Iran's religious and ethnic minorities, women and people with physical, learning and psychosocial disabilities, can access higher education without discrimination;
- Ensure that ethnic minorities have the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue such as Arabic, Azerbaijani Turkic, Baluchi, Kurdish and Turkmen, in addition to Farsi, in order to ensure that all communities can take full and unrestricted part in cultural life, in line with recommendations made by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.³⁰⁶

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

- immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience, that is all individuals imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression or other human rights; and drop all charges that are pending against any individuals which stem solely from their peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression or other human rights;
- Review all laws in the Penal Code, in particular its Book Five, Press Code and other stand-alone provisions relating to the peaceful expression of conscientiously held views with a view to bringing Iranian law into conformity with Iran's obligations under international law including Article 19 of the ICCPR;
- Review all Penal Code provisions relating to peaceful assembly in order to ensure that everyone may exercise this right, including by ensuring that no one can be prosecuted for taking part in a peaceful gathering;
- Review and, as necessary, amend all Penal Code provisions relating to freedom of association in order to ensure their conformity with international law;
- Uphold the right to freedom of expression by all, including by protecting the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers and through any media;

DISCRIMINATION

- Review, amend or abolish all laws that discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion,

ethnicity, birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, or other status;

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls in law and in practice, including by modifying or abolishing discriminatory laws (such as the Penal Code), regulations, customs and practices;
- Amend or annul all laws and policies that discriminate against women and girls' equal access to higher education, such as gender segregation of classes and institutions, discriminatory quotas and bans on women and girls studying certain courses or disciplines;
- Ensure that academic posts are awarded on the basis of merit and without discrimination on any ground, such as sex, race, religion, political opinion or belief or sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Ratify promptly and without reservation the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol;
- End discrimination against Baha'is in law, policy and practice and end discriminatory measures against Iran's ethnic and other religious minorities including, Ahwazi Arabs, Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, Kurds, Ahl-e Haq, Sufis and Christian converts, including in relation to access to higher education.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

- Ensure that all criminal offences are defined narrowly and clearly in law, in line with the principle of legality;
- Ensure that no one is detained or imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, association or assembly. Anyone so detained should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Immediately inform all detainees of the reasons for their arrest or detention and provide them with full information about their rights;
- Guarantee the right to fair trial at all stages, consistent with international standards, in particular Article 14 of the ICCPR. Iranian laws must ensure that all arrested persons promptly receive an effective opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention before a court that has the power to order his or her release; have access to a lawyer from the time of their arrest; equality before the courts; the right to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial court or tribunal established by law; and the right to meaningful appeal;
- Ensure that anyone deprived of their liberty is permitted to receive family visits, and that families are informed about the location and status of their family members in detention or serving prison terms;
- Guarantee the independence of the judiciary and ensure that effective safeguards are in place to prevent interference by the Ministry of Intelligence or other security forces or agencies in judicial cases;
- Abolish secret detention, incommunicado detention and the use of prolonged solitary confinement;

- Abolish, the use of all special courts in Iran, including Revolutionary Courts and the Special Court of the Clergy;
- End the use of televised forced “confessions”; these breach the right to the presumption of innocence and the right not to be compelled to testify against oneself or to confess guilt;
- Impose an immediate moratorium on executions, in accordance with repeated calls by the UN General Assembly, and institute prompt steps to reduce the number of capital offences, as first steps towards ultimate abolition of the death penalty.

PREVENTION OF TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

- Publicly condemn torture and other ill-treatment, including by instructing all the security forces that these abuses will not be tolerated under any circumstances;
- Ensure that torture and other ill-treatment are explicitly prohibited by law regardless of their intent and that such acts are criminal offences punishable by penalties that reflect the gravity of the offence, without recourse to the death penalty. Define torture as a crime under Iranian law, ensuring that the prohibition of torture is not restricted to when it is “for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information”, as the Constitution currently provides. Guarantee that the legal definition of torture is consistent with the definition in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), and that Iranian law is fully consistent with the CAT;
- End secret detention and ensure that all detainees are held in official places of detention under the control of the Judiciary, and that they are given immediate, and thereafter frequent, access to a lawyer of their choosing, who should be present at all interrogations;
- End the practice of incommunicado detention. Ensure detainees have effective access to family members without delay and regularly thereafter;
- Repeal all legislation, in particular the Islamic Penal Code, which allows for the application of corporal punishment, including flogging, amputation and stoning to death; and establish a moratorium on such punishments pending their full abolition;
- Ensure that all allegations of torture or other ill-treatment are independently investigated, promptly, thoroughly and impartially, and that officials responsible for such abuses are brought to justice – without recourse to the death penalty – and that victims receive full reparation;
- Ensure that no one is coerced into testifying against themselves or others, or to confess guilt, and that no statements extracted through the use of torture and other ill-treatment are admitted as evidence in court, except against a person accused of torture or other ill-treatment as evidence that the “confession” or other statement was made;
- Ensure detainees have prompt access to a proper medical examination, if requested, and to medical care on request or as necessary throughout any period of detention. Detainees should be allowed to seek an independent medical opinion if desired.

RIGHT TO A REMEDY FOR VIOLATIONS

- Establish independent and impartial bodies to investigate allegations of human rights violations promptly, thoroughly and effectively, and provide appropriate reparations to victims

and affected families in accordance with international human rights standards;

- Discipline or prosecute as appropriate security, intelligence, judiciary and other officials at all levels who are responsible for the mistreatment of detainees in custody, ensuring that all investigative and sanction procedures, as well as any criminal trials, are carried out in accordance with the highest international standards;
- Allow international scrutiny of the human rights situation in Iran, including by allowing the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran to visit, in addition to other thematic UN human rights mechanisms that have requested visits, as well as independent international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International;
- Accede to optional protocols to allow for individual complaints to UN treaty bodies.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES

- Ratify immediately and without any reservation the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; the optional protocols to the ICCPR and the ICESCR;
- Reconfirm, and give effect in practice to, the government's standing invitation for UN human rights experts – special procedures – to visit Iran at the earliest possible opportunity, such as by facilitating an early visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education to recommend to the government best practice policies and methods to ensure that students do not face unfair disciplinary procedures for the peaceful exercise of rights guaranteed under international law.

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Ensure that resettlement, subsequent to the recognition of refugee status, takes place promptly and fairly;
- Ensure that political considerations, such as concerns over Iran's nuclear programme, do not deter the international community from taking concerted measures in response to the failure of the Iranian authorities to respect their human rights obligations and their obstruction of international scrutiny, including the UN human rights mechanisms;
- Urge the Iranian authorities to agree to a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran and to fulfil its commitment to facilitate and receive visits by UN Special Procedures relating to human rights that have asked to visit Iran, in accordance with the standing invitation already issued by the Iranian authorities.

¹ Interviewed in March 2013. Name withheld due to his fears for his safety and the safety of his family and friends in Iran.

² United Nations Population Fund, overview of Iran, accessed in March 2014.

³ For further details of the crackdown see the following Amnesty International reports: Iran: Election contested, repression compounded (Index: MDE 13/123/2009, 10 December 2009), at <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/123/2009/en>; From Protest to prison: Iran one year after the election (Index: MDE 13/123/2009, 9 June 2010) published June 2010, at <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/062/2010/en> ; and "We are ordered to crush you": expanding repression of dissent in Iran (Index MDE 13/002/2012, February 2012), at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/002/2012>

⁴ Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education, Distribution of students in higher education based on level, area of study and gender in academic year 2005-2006, at: http://irphe.ac.ir/files/site1/pages/Stat_1384_85/EnrolmentTable/6_2.pdf

⁵ Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education, Distribution of students in higher education based on level, area of study and gender in academic year 2007-2008, at: http://irphe.ac.ir/files/site1/pages/Stat_1386_87/EnrolmentTable/6_2.pdf

⁶ Radio Zamaneh, A committee formed to return students and lecturers to universities, , 11 September 2013, at: <http://www.radiozamaneh.com/97850#.UphivycSpFI>

⁷ The Official Website of the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology, The Ministry of Science published the report of its 100 days of activities, 31 August 2013, at: <http://www.msrt.ir/SitePages/NewsDetails.aspx?NewsID=4819>

⁸ In the early 1970s the left-leaning Confederation of Iranian Students was one of the strongest student groups (see: Nikki Keddie: *Modern Iran – Roots and Results of Revolution*, Updated Edition, 2006; pp217-224); while on the eve of the Revolution, two of the largest student groups on the left were Daneshjuyan-e Pisgham (Vanguard Students), affiliated to People's Fedayin Guerrillas Organization before it split into several groups; and Daneshjouyan-e Mobarez (Combatant Students), affiliated to a coalition of Marxist-Leninist and Maoist organizations.

⁹ See, for example, the Amnesty International press release, Iran: Mark National Student Day by freeing prisoners of conscience (6 December 2012), available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/iran-mark-national-student-day-freeing-prisoners-conscience-2012-12-05> ; and the Public Statement, Iran: Students languish in jail as academic year starts (Index: MDE 13/091/2010, 22 September 2010) at: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/091/2010/en/b9ed3338-4bc3-40bb-8a6e-f698e581baed/mde130912010en.pdf>; or the feature, Students in Iran face repression and arrest, available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/students-iran-face-repression-arrest-20090318>

¹⁰ They were members of the Union of Islamic Students Associations of Universities Nationwide-Office

for the Consolidation of Unity (ISA-OCU), formed in September 1979 by University of Tehran students who supported Ayatollah Khomeini.

¹¹Anjoman-e Daneshjouyan-e Mosalman

¹² Founded in 1965 as an Islamist and Marxist organization opposed to the Shah, the PMOI participated in the 1979 Revolution but was banned by the Iranian government in 1982. During the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein allowed the PMOI to base its operations in Iraq and to mount attacks from there against Iran. Some 3,000 plus members and supporters of the PMOI currently remain in Iraq, where they have been confined to a camp – first Camp Ashraf and now Camp Liberty, a former US military base – for several years under threat of expulsion and subject to repeated attacks by Iraqi government forces. Also known as the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK), the PMOI is considered a terrorist organization by the Iranian government. It was also designated a “terrorist organization” by the European Union, Canada and the USA for a number of years but the EU lifted this designation in 2009 and Canada and the USA followed suit in 2012.

¹³ The Website of Ayatollah Khomeini, Consolidate unity, 17 September 2012, at http://www.imam-khomeini.ir/fa/n3047/%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%88%DB%8C%D8%B3_%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C_%D8%A7%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B9_%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C/%D9%86%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87_%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2/%D8%AA%D8%AD%DA%A9%DB%8C%D9%85_%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%AA_%DA%A9%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%AF

¹⁴ Its founders included Habib Bitaraf, Abbas Abdi, Mosen Mirdamadi and Ebrahim Asgharzadeh. Some of them became members of city councils, Members of Parliament and even ministers a decade or two later.

¹⁵ Established under a decree issued by Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1979, the Cultural Revolution Headquarters was tasked with “[i]nviting dedicated opinion holders, from among the Muslim professors and other educated groups, who are dedicated and faithful to the Islamic Republic in order to form a council to plan for various disciplines and future cultural policy of the universities, based on Islamic culture, to choose and prepare merited, dedicated and informed professors, as well as other issues related to the Islamic educational revolution.” See the Official Website of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, The History of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, at: <http://www.farhangoeIm.ir/%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%DB%8C/%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AE%DA%86%D9%87-%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%8A.aspx>

¹⁶ The Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution was established in 1984 on the basis of a decree by Ayatollah Khomeini, replacing the 1980-1983 Cultural Revolution Headquarters. It is charged with overseeing the re-structure and supervision of the tertiary education system. Its 40 members are appointed by the Supreme Leader and it has de facto legislative power in the field of education and culture.

¹⁷ Amnesty International, Public Statement Iran: Allow peaceful commemorations of 18 Tir (9 July) events, (Index: MDE 13/069//2009, 9 July 2009) at:
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/069/2009/en/0d88c09f-b528-439b-b3cd-e4e4b9e46397/mde130692009en.pdf>

¹⁸ Student activists told Amnesty International in 2004, that a range of 'fractions' in the OCU were not in favour of linking of Iran to international human rights standards.

¹⁹ President Hashemi Rafsanjani held office from 1989-1997.

²⁰ Article 3, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1980

²¹ See the Website of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, The history of the Council of the Cultural Revolution, at: <http://www.farhangoeim.ir/%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%DB%8C/%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AE%DA%86%D9%87-%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%8A.aspx>

²² See the Website of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, the Credence of the resolutions of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, at:
<http://www.farhangoeim.ir/%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%DB%8C/%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%DB%8C.aspx>

²³ Resolution 21, 7 May 1985. See: <http://www.iranculture.org/fa/Default.aspx?current=provlistbydate>

²⁴ Resolution 542, September 2004. In 2008, Representative of the Supreme Leader in the universities said that the "testament of Imam Khomeini" will be offered as an optional subject in all the universities upon the SCCR's approval (21 August 2008; accessed at: <http://www.hamshahronline.ir/details/61145>). However, the SCCR appears not to have passed a resolution to that effect yet. Nevertheless, the "testament of Imam Khomeini" has been among the general subjects at the Islamic Azad University for many years alongside the "Qu'ran" as a non-credit subject.

²⁵ Resolution 433, 8 December 1998.

²⁶ The Website of the Council for Islamization of Universities and Educational Centers, An Introduction to the Council for Islamization of Universities and Educational Centers, at:
<http://iuec.ir/?siteid=14&pageid=1573&siteid=14>

²⁷ Resolution 459, 14 March 2000.

²⁸ Mehr News Agency, Deputy Minister of Science announces the table of statistics of academic staff and students at higher education, 26 August 2012, at: <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/1680932>

²⁹ Mehr News Agency, Deputy Minister of Science announces the table of statistics of academic staff and students at higher education, 26 August 2012, at: <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/1680932>

³⁰ Resolution 8, 5 February 1985.

³¹ Resolutions 35, 3 September 1985; 60, 1985; 86, 26 July 1988; 152, 14 June 1988; 153, 21 June 1988; and 154, 28 June 1988.

³² Resolution 23, 21 May 1985. Another resolution provides for the recruitment of scholars of the seminaries (Shi'a and Sunni included) without academic qualification (Resolution 267, 17 December 1991).

³³ Resolution 121, 28 July 1987.

³⁴ Resolution 566, 26 July 2005.

³⁵ The Website of the Public Culture Council, Reforming the situation of hejab in the society is an important and serious issue, 21 June 2011,, at: <http://pcci.farhang.gov.ir/fa/news/8146>

³⁶ See the text of the Resolution at:
http://pcci.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=758:880303095959&catid=258:1384&Itemid=498

³⁷ Each Disciplinary Committee comprises a representative of the Supreme Leader, the university's Deputy Chancellor for Student Affairs plus a member of the academic staff and two students appointed by the university's Chancellor.

³⁸ Resolution 358, 5 September 1995.

³⁹ Resolution 439, 16 March 1999. "The punitive rulings and opinions of the universities disciplinary committees may not be investigated by the Administrative Court of Justice."

⁴⁰ Article 3(14) provides for equality of all before the law. Article 15 permits the use of "local and ethnic languages" and the teaching of "ethnic literature" in schools, while establishing Persian as the official language. Article 19 states: "All people of Iran, whatever the ethnic group or tribe to which they belong, enjoy equal rights, and colour, race, language, and the like do not bestow any privilege".

⁴¹ Amnesty International, Report, Iran: Defending the minority rights, the Ahwazi Arabs (Index: MDE 13/056/2006, 16 May 2006), at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/056/2006/en> , Amnesty

International, Report, Iran: Human rights abuses against the Baluchi minority, (Index: MDE 13/104/2007, 13 September 2007) at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/104/2007/en> , Amnesty International, Report, Iran: Human rights abuses against the Kurdish minority in Iran (Index: MDE 13/088/2008, 30 July 2008) at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/088/2008/en>

⁴² Iran is ranked 139 out of 189 in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's list of Women in national parliaments. See www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm Viewed on 12 March 2014.

⁴³ Formally, the Council of Guardians of the Constitution, this body comprises 12 members, six of whom are Islamic faqihs, experts in Islamic law directly appointed by the Supreme Leader, while the six others are jurists "specializing in different areas of law" who are elected by the parliament from nominees of the Head of the Judiciary.

⁴⁴ Parliament's Research Centre (Markaz-e Pajooresh-haye Majles), Changes in Indices of Women's Domain and Girls' Education in Iran 1996-2006 (tahavollat-e shakhes-hayehoze-ye zanan va amuzesh dokhtaran dar Iran 1375-1385); 9 January 2008, p 32, at: <http://rc.majlis.ir/fa/report/show/733423>. It is to be noted that writers of the study have provided its title in English as: Women Change Indexes and Girls Education in Iran: 1996-2006

⁴⁵ Zeinab Peighambarzadeh, Gender discrimination in the university began with the Cultural Revolution, 8 March 2012, at: <http://www.edu-right.net/talk/39-conversations/881-zeinampeighambarzade-interview>

⁴⁶ Maqsd Farasatkah, Selections from Maqsd Farasatkah's narrative of the Cultural Revolution, published in *Asseman*, December 2012, pp. 64-66, at: <http://farasatkah.blogspot.com/category/cat-7>.

⁴⁷ "Female applicants must be able to study in any course they wish unless there are Sharia-based, social or academic prohibitions on their study in some courses." Resolution 187, 2 May 1989.

⁴⁸ Changes in Indices of Women's Domain and Girls' Education in Iran 1996-2006, p.33, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Parliament's Research Centre (Markaz-e Pajooresh-haye Majles), Changes in Indices of Women's Domain and Girls' Education in Iran 1996-2006 (tahavollat-e shakhes-hayehoze-ye zanan va amuzesh dokhtaran dar Iran 1375-1385);, 9 January 2008, p 32, at: <http://rc.majlis.ir/fa/report/show/733423>

⁵⁰ Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education, A comparison of the total number of students in higher education from 1994-1995 academic year to 2003-2004 academic year, at: http://irphe.ac.ir/files/site1/pages/Stat_1382_83/EnrolmentTable/9.5.jpg

⁵¹ Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education, Distribution of students in higher education based on level, area of study and gender in academic year 2007-2008, at: http://irphe.ac.ir/files/site1/pages/Stat_1386_87/EnrolmentTable/6_2.pdf

⁵² Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education, Distribution of students in higher education based on level, area of study and gender in academic year 2008-2009, at:

http://irphe.ac.ir/files/site1/pages/Stat_1387_88/EnrolmentTable/6_2.pdf

⁵³ Bijan Yeganeh, Gender quota at universities: another example of gender discrimination, 28 February 2008, at: <http://www.meydaan.com/wwShow.aspx?wwid=725>

⁵⁴ Mehr News Agency, Women [studying] in men's fields of study and the gender composition of universities, 20 June 2011, at: <http://old.mehrnews.com/fa/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=1339876>

⁵⁵ In 2011, when the former presidential candidates Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi called for Iranians to demonstrate in solidarity with the protesters in Egypt, Tunisia and other Arab states, the authorities reacted swiftly and with draconian impact, incarcerating both opposition leaders and Zahra Rahnavard, Mir Hossein Mousavi's wife and a political activist herself, under "house arrest" that still remain in force more than three years later.

⁵⁶ Khabar Online, The Minister of Science: 82 per cent of families agree with gender segregation/ the country is facing sanctions; why student should not tolerate currency problems? 16 November 2012, at: <http://khabaronline.ir/detail/258023/>

⁵⁷ Vahideh Molavi, The gender quota system; from plan to implementation, 17 December 2007, at: <http://www.meydaan.com/ShowArticle.aspx?arid=407>

⁵⁸ Aftab News Agency, Reviving the plans for the gender quota system, 31 January 2007, at: <http://aftabnews.ir/fa/news/56834/%D8%A7%D8%AD%DB%8C%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD-%D8%B3%D9%87%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%87-%E2%80%8C%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%AF%DB%8C-%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%AA%DB%8C>

⁵⁹ Mehr News Agency, 55 per cent of those who passed the entrance exam were accepted at universities/ a study of the reasons for the increase in the number of female university entrants, 28 February 2006, at: <http://old.mehrnews.com/fa/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsId=296494>

⁶⁰ Bijan Yeganeh, Gender quota at universities: another example of gender discrimination, 28 February 2008, at: <http://www.meydaan.com/wwShow.aspx?wwid=725>

⁶¹ Mehr News Agency, 33 harms caused by admission of girls to universities, , 3 July 2011, at: <http://old.mehrnews.com/fa/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=1348602>

⁶²Changes in Indices of Women's Domain and Girls' Education in Iran 1996-2006.

⁶³Changes in Indices of Women's Domain and Girls' Education in Iran 1996-2006, p.53, op. cit.

⁶⁴ Mehr News Agency, The Research centre warns about problems resulting from the increased presence of women at universities and higher education institutes, 4 February 2008, at: <http://old.mehrnews.com/fa/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsId=632613>

⁶⁵ Under Resolution 628 (24 August 2008), state universities must allocate a minimum of 65% and the Islamic Azad University a minimum of 70% of their capacities to students of the same province.

⁶⁶ Mehr News Agency, Removing women's admissions to 77 subjects in 36 universities, 6 August 2012, at: <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/1666033>

⁶⁷ Mehr News Agency, Subject codes for all single-sex subjects of the 2013 University Entrance Exam, 14 August 2013, at: <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/2115101>

⁶⁸ Mehr News Agency, Removing women's admissions to 77 subjects in 36 universities, 6 August 2012, at: <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/1666033>

⁶⁹ Daneshjoo News, Students' efforts fruited; considerable decrease in the application of the gender quota system in the 2013-2014 academic year, 11 August 2013, at: <http://www.daneshjooonews.com/archives/4152>

⁷⁰ Kaleme, The Ministry of health in pursuit of restricting women's access to medical courses, 6 April 2014, at: <http://www.kaleme.com/1393/01/17/kIm-179584/>

⁷¹ Fars News Agency, A 150 million population was first raised by Imam [Khomeini]/ We should have changed our population policies after 1992, 25 July 2012, at : <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13910504000912>

⁷²Supreme Leader: Unreasonable Western sanctions are barbaric/we shall pass by economic problems, 10 October 2012, at: <http://isna.ir/fa/news/91071912659/%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B8%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%85-%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%BA%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B7%D9%82%DB%8C-%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A8>

⁷³ BBC Persian, The Supreme Leader: we want a minimum population of 150 million, 31 October 2013, at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2013/10/131031_i38_iran_khamenei_population.shtml

⁷⁴ Resolution 712, 22 May 2012.

⁷⁵ Hamshahri Online, Knowledge of the Family will replace courses on Population Control and Family Planning, , 15 November 2012, at: <http://www.hamshahrionline.ir/details/191354>

⁷⁶ Fars News Agency, A 100-day deadline for the Minister of Health to implement new population control policies, 14 October 2013, at: <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13920722000771>

⁷⁷ Until Fair Family Law, Students and women's rights activists file a complaint against the Ministry of Science, the Assessment Organization, and universities at the Administrative Court of Justice, 13 September 2013, at: <http://fairfamilylaw.org/spip.php?article10406>

⁷⁸ILNA News Agency, Equal right to education; first demand of women, 16 September 2013, at: <http://www.ilna.ir/news/news.cfm?id=105178>

⁷⁹ Kaleme, The Head of the Court of Cassation: the complaint about the gender quota has not been investigated yet, 7 November 2013, at: <http://www.kaleme.com/1392/08/16/klm-164216/>

⁸⁰ Other universities included Amir Kabir University of Technology, Esfahan University, Mohaghegh Ardebili University in Ardebil, Zabol, Honar in Shiraz, Sahand in Tabriz and the University of the Petroleum Industry in Tehran. See Shargh newspaper, Single-gender admission to 40 courses in 20 universities, 7 August 2011, at: <http://sharghnewspaper.ir/News/90/05/16/7559.html>

⁸¹ Campaign for Equality, Enforcement of gender discrimination policies in accepting female students in 45 universities across the country, 7 August 2011, , at: <http://we-change.org/spip.php?article8349>

⁸²Jaras, Gender segregation in more than 60 universities across the country, 4 August 2012, accessed at: <http://www.rahesabz.net/story/57103/>

⁸³ For example Arak University in central Iran, admitted single-sex cohorts in Persian literature and Arabic literature courses and Lorestan University located in west Iran admitted single-sex cohorts in its psychology, education, economics and business management programs. See: Nazanin Shahrokhi and Parastou Dokouhaki, A separation at Iranian Universities, Middle East research and Information Project, at: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero101812>

⁸⁴ Ebrahim Khandan, Sex-segregation and the dream of the Iranian government for Islamic Universities, 4 April 2013, BBC Persian, at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2013/04/130330_iran_university.shtml

⁸⁵Hamshahri newspaper, The Minister of Health: gender segregation is not possible in medical courses, 14 August 2012, at: <http://www.hamshahrionline.ir/details/181064>

⁸⁶ Director of Expansions, Operation of 20 single-gender universities in new academic year, 8 September 2012, at: <http://www.hamshahrionline.ir/details/183837>. One of the centres mentioned as a female-only by the official is the Food Industry School of Bahar, affiliated to Bu-Ali Sina University of Hamedan. This institute existed before and has apparently been allocated to girls only. Some other examples mentioned included: the male-only Higher Education Centre in the city of Kashmar, affiliated to Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, two Higher Education Centres affiliated to Lorestan University in Pol-e Dokhtar and Noorabad, and the Higher Education Centre in Mahllat affiliated to Arak University, the female-only Higher Education Centres affiliated to Lorestan University in Alashtar and Kuhdasht.

⁸⁷ Mardomsalari Newspaper, Survey regarding gender segregation conducted during PhD entrance exam yesterday, 9 March 2013, at: <http://www.mardomsalari.com/Template1/Article.aspx?AID=24293>

⁸⁸ Tasnim News Agency, The Minister of Science in the open session of parliament: I do not oppose single-sex universities/ reducing the mingling is the focus not segregating the sexes, 27 October 2013,

at: <http://www.tasnimnews.com/Home/Single/176143>

⁸⁹The Baha'i faith has around 350,000 adherents in Iran.

⁹⁰ Vahid Sadeqi, The history of deprivation of Baha'is in Iran from higher education after the Islamic revolution, 25 October 2009, at: <http://www.iranpresswatch.org/fa/post/576>

⁹¹ Interviewed on 12 April 2013 by phone.

⁹² Baha'i International Community, Nature of the persecution against the Baha'is in Iran: Background and documentation, January 2013 edition, Page 8, at:<http://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Iran-Background-0113.pdf>

⁹³ Interviewed on 18 March 2013 in Ankara, Turkey, name withheld to protect his security.

⁹⁴ Interviewed on 10 April 2013 via Skype, name withheld at his request to protect his security.

⁹⁵ The existence of the confidential memorandum and its contents were revealed by the UN Special Representative on Iran, Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, in his report to the UN Commission on Human Rights in January 1993. See: Commission on Human Rights, UN Doc E/CN.4/1993/41, , 49th session, 28 January 1993, Final report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, , para, 310.

⁹⁶ Baha'i World New Service, Confidential Iran memo exposes policy to deny Baha'i students university education, , 27 August, 2007, at:news.bahai.org/story/575,

⁹⁷ Comments by the Islamic republic of Iran on the Special Rapporteur's draft report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, September 2013, available at: <http://shaheedoniran.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Comments-by-the-Islamic-Republic-of-Iran-on-the-draft-report-of-the-Special-Rapporteur.pdf>

⁹⁸ Tasnim News, The latest Fatwas of the Supreme Leader regarding using the internet, satellite TV, trade with Zionist companies, working overtime, etc, 30 July 2013, at: <http://www.tasnimnews.com/Home/Single/107422>

⁹⁹ See Section 5.2, "Starring" refers to a system that officials at universities and the Ministry of Science have used to permanently or temporarily bar students not conforming to state imposed social and political views from higher education.

¹⁰⁰ The authorities arrested at least eight students while others were summoned for interrogation before the Revolutionary Court for interrogation. Three students – Ehsan Mansouri, Ahmad Qasaban and Majid Tavakkoli– were tried in November 2007 before Branch six of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on charges of "insulting Islam", "insulting the Supreme Leader," and "acting against the national security". All three retracted "confessions" they had made in pre-trial detention, alleging that these had been

extracted under torture, yet the court convicted them and imposed prison sentences ranging from 22 to 30 months. However, they were released on 13 August 2008, apparently on probation.

¹⁰¹ The offending Deputy Chancellor was briefly detained and later sacked. A court sentenced him to 60 lashes, 30 of them suspended. The female student was also sentenced to be flogged 30 times. See: Radio Zamaaneh, The accused of the Zanjan University incident convicted, 7 February 2009, at: http://zamaaneh.com/news/2009/02/post_7923.html.

¹⁰² Farhad Rahbar, The University of Tehran Chancellor, speaking to Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran Channel 1 on 18 June 2009.

¹⁰³ In May 2011, the Prosecutor-General said that 40 out of 50 people convicted in connection with the event had received prison terms or fines. See: Frasn News Agency, 40 people involved in the cases of University of Tehran dormitories and the Sobhan Building have been sentenced to imprisonment, at: <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9002191377>

¹⁰⁴ In February 2010, the Persian Service of the BBC obtained leaked video footage of the violent attack on the dormitory by police Special Guards and Basij, in which a voice is heard to say that the attack was ordered by "Commander Rajab", seemingly a reference to Azizollah Rajabzadeh, who headed the Greater Tehran's police in June 2009. The video can be seen at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2010/02/100222_115_uni_footage.shtml

¹⁰⁵ Subsequently, a parliamentary fact-finding committee reportedly investigated the actions taken by the security forces against student dormitories at universities in Tehran and elsewhere but its findings have never been presented to an open meeting of the Majlis or publicly disclosed. See: News Website Asr Iran: Motahari's criticism of failure to present the report in Majlis sparked tensions in the parliament, at: <http://www.asriran.com/fa/news/158095/%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B7%D9%87%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%85-%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AA-%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B4-%DA%A9%D9%88%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%B1%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B4-%DA%A9%D8%B4%DB%8C%D8%AF>

¹⁰⁶ Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said it would investigate the killing, but no record of any investigation has ever been published. See: Peyk-e Iran: The Parliament will investigate the killing of a young man in Esfahan on 13 Aban, 7 November 2009, at: <http://www.peykeiran.com/Content.aspx?ID=9011> Information submitted to the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, the OCU alleged that a total of 27 students lost their lives when the authorities quelled the civil unrest that followed the 2009 presidential election.

¹⁰⁷ Amnesty International, Election contested, repression compounded (Index: MDE 13/123/2009)

¹⁰⁸ Amnesty International reports: Iran: Election contested, repression compounded (Index: MDE 13/123/2009, 10 December 2009), at <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/123/2009/en>

¹⁰⁹Radio Farda, Mohsen Rouholamini; father tied to the system, son a victim at Kahrizak, 28 April 2013, at: <http://www.radiofarda.com/content/f7-victimes-of-88-mohsen-rouholamini/24970973.html>

¹¹⁰ BBC Persian, Ayatollah Khamenei expresses concerns about teaching humanities at universities, 31 August 2009, at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/08/090830_si_khamenei_universities.shtml

¹¹¹ Iran has a Ministry of Intelligence while the Revolutionary Guards also has an “Intelligence Division.” The Judiciary and the Police Force have also been reported to have Intelligence Departments. All institutions, including the universities have security services entitled *Harast-e Ettela'at* (Force for the Protection of Intelligence) which are linked to the Ministry of Intelligence.

¹¹² Amnesty International, ‘We are ordered to crush you’– Expanding repression of dissent in Iran (AI Index MDE 13/002/2012, 28 February 2012, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/002/2012> . In January 2012, the Police Chief Brigadier General Esma'il Ahmadi-Moghaddam, announced that the Cyber Police, established a year before and intended “to confront Internet crimes and counter social networks that spread ‘espionage and riots’”, was now operational throughout the country.

¹¹³ Kaleme website, Kamran Daneshjoo: Those active in the 2009 incidents do not have the right to enter universities, 10 April 2012, at: <http://www.kaleme.com/1391/01/22/klm-97685/>

¹¹⁴ The Website of the Supreme Leader, University professors are commanders of the front of soft war 30 August 2009,, at: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/?p=contentShow&id=5814>

¹¹⁵ The Website of the Council for Islamization of Universities and Educational Centres, A glance at the “Council for Islamization of Universities and Educational Centres”, at: <http://www.iuec.ir/index.aspx?siteid=14&pageid=1573>

¹¹⁶ The Website of the Council for Islamization of Universities and Educational Centres, The Statute of the Council for Islamization of Universities and Educational Centres, at: <http://www.iuec.ir/index.aspx?siteid=14&pageid=1574>

¹¹⁷ See the official website of Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi at: <http://mesbahyazdi.ir/>. Investigative journalist Akbar Ganji has alleged that he was one of the clerics who had issued fatwas for the serial killings of the intellectuals in the 1990s. See: Laura Secor, Whose Iran?, the New York Times, 28 January 2007, at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/28/magazine/28iran.t.html?pagewanted=1&r=1&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss& Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi infamously called for the execution of university professor Hashem Aghajari for apostasy in 2002. See: Saeed Dehghan, Band-e Dal, Hamshahri Online, 17 December 2002, at: http://www.hamshahronline.ir/hamnews/1381/810926/intep.htm#intep4>

¹¹⁸ BBC Persian, Ayatollah Khamenei expresses concerns about teaching humanities at universities, 31 August 2009, at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/08/090830_si_khamenei_universities.shtml

¹¹⁹ Los Angeles Times, Iran announces plan to purge universities of Western influences, 7 September 2009, at: articles.latimes.com/2009/sep/07/world/fg-iran-schools7

¹²⁰ Daily Hamshahri , The Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies is revisiting the humanities courses, 6 September 2009, at: <http://hamshahrionline.ir/details/89705>

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¹²⁴ Ebtakar News, Three humanities subject Islamicized, 29 October 2012, accessed at:
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¹²⁵ Radio Zamaneh, Objections to the dissolving of the School of Management and Economics of Sharif University of Technology, 22 April 2012, at: <http://www.radiozamaneh.com/65016>

¹²⁶ Mehr News Agency, Admissions capacity at the School of Management and Economics announced, 14 May 2013, at: <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/2054726>

¹²⁷ Deutsche Welle, "Studying 'Women in Islam' further radicalizes feminists", 23 May 2012, at: <http://dw.de/p/1510k> . The Council has 12 clerics among its 20 members and is headed by Gholamali Haddad Adel.

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¹²⁹ Saham News, Two female students at Rouedhen Azad University assaulted by disciplinary agents , 26 April 2012, at: <http://sahamnews.org/1391/02/199391/>

¹³⁰ Tabnak News Agency, Assault of a female student in Roudehen, 18 October 2008, at:
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¹³¹ Jaras (Jonbesh-e Rah-e Sabz), 15 female students at Shahr-e Kord University were barred from dormitories for 'inappropriate hejab'. 12 April 2012, at: <http://www.rahesabz.net/story/51860/>

¹³² Peyk-e Iran, 50 female students accused of inappropriate hejab barred from dormitories at Shahr-e kord University, 1 October 2012, <http://www.peykeiran.com/Content.aspx?ID=53665>

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Note 3/D of Article 6 of the 1995 Disciplinary Regulations for Students, at: <http://news.um.ac.ir/news-files-hajab.PDF>

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¹³⁵ Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Regulations on professional conduct and clothing of students in medical universities and schools across the country, 16 August 2012, at: <http://portal.arakmu.ac.ir/portal/File/ShowFile.aspx?ID=e584904f-d8a1-4695-9e76-db23b6c7c1b3> . For Summary see: Khabar Online, Regulations on professional conduct of medical students; from prohibition of make up for women to prohibition of short-sleeve shirts for men, 31 December 2012, at: <http://khabaronline.ir/detail/267443/>

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¹⁵¹ Fars News Agency, Starring of some students is the heritage of the previous administration, 22 December 2006, at: <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8510010091>. Director of the Education Assessment Organization of the Ministry of Science, Ebrahim Khodaei, reported the same numbers as 32 out of 11,000. See: Khabar online, Who Starred students?, 4 December 2012, at: <http://khabaronline.ir/detail/279907/society/education>

¹⁵² The Human Rights Committee of the Office for Consolidation of Unity, Report on violation of right to education of students in Iran, July 2013, at: <http://www.daneshjoonews.com/archives/1697>

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¹⁶² Radio Farda, The negative reaction of the parliament to return of starred students to universities, 27 December 2013, at:
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¹⁶⁵ Interviewed on 8 April 2013 via Skype.

¹⁶⁶ Interviewed on 5 April 2013 via Skype.

¹⁶⁷ Amnesty International, Iran: From Protest to Prison: Iran one year after the election (Index: MDE 13/062/2010) page 27

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http://sabzabol.blogspot.com/2011/04/blog-post_2523.html .

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<http://www.kaleme.com/1392/07/29/klm-162268/>

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<http://www.kaleme.com/1391/01/17/klm-97021/>

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¹⁸³ Amnesty International, 'We are ordered to crush you'– Expanding repression of dissent in Iran (AI Index MDE 13/002/2012, 28February 2012, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/002/2012>

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¹⁹⁵ For the text of the article, see Appendix 5 of "Addicted to Death: Executions for Drugs Offences in Iran", (Index MDE 13/090/2011, December 2011), at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/090/2011/en>.

¹⁹⁶ The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found following its visit to Iran in 2003, that "through an extremely restrictive interpretation of article 128 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and of note No. 3 to the law on the selection of counsel, the revolutionary tribunals [courts] - in addition to the fact that

they have no constitutional legitimacy - abuse the already questionable authority given them under these instruments to exclude counsel at their discretion from hearings in cases covered by this article, that is, those involving the internal and external security of the State, cases in which their presence is all the more necessary. This derogation is so serious that it makes these tribunals 'special courts'". The Working Group recommended the abolition of Revolutionary Courts. See Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Visit To The Islamic Republic Of Iran (15-27 February 2003), (UN Document E/CN.4/2004/3/Add.2), 27 June 2003, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G03/147/77/PDF/G0314777.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁹⁷ The Committee of Human Rights Reporters was founded in 2006 and campaigns against all kinds of human rights violations, including against women, children, prisoners, workers and others.

¹⁹⁸ Interviewed on 22 March 2013 in Nevsehir, Turkey.

¹⁹⁹ Interviewed on 4 April 2013 via skype

²⁰⁰ Interviewed on 12 April 2013 via Skype.

²⁰¹ Interviewed on 22 March 2013 in Kayseri, Turkey.

²⁰² Interviewed in Kayseri, Turkey, on 18 March 2013.

²⁰³ This type of report is called a "final circulation report" in which the interrogator in charge of security-related cases summarizes key points and makes recommendations as to the eventual punishment.

²⁰⁴ Interviewed on 24 March 2013 in Eskesehir, Turkey.

²⁰⁵ Interviewed on 19 March 2013 in Kayseri, Turkey.

²⁰⁶ HRANA, Flogging sentence for student activist at Tabriz Branch of Azad University, Amir Chamani, implemented, 23 May 2013, at: <https://hra-news.org/1389-01-27-05-27-21/16720-1.html>

²⁰⁷ OCU reports to UN Special Rapporteur on Iran.

²⁰⁸ For an English translation of Dr Maleki's letter to Ahmed Shaheed, see Persian2English, I testify to 32 years of crime, 11 September 2011, at: <http://persian2english.com/?p=22689>

²⁰⁹ BBC Persian, Mohammad Maleki complains to President Rouhani about the Ministry of Intelligence: I have ran out of patience, 5 February 2014, at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2014/02/140205_i39_mohammad_maleki_intelligence_ministry.shtml

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²¹¹ Jaras, Soleymani: I was interrogated while being beaten and sworn at, 12 June 2010, at:
<http://www.rahesabz.net/story/17299/>

²¹² Human Rights Council, 25 th session, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, A/HRC/25/75, 11 March 2014, para, 23.

²¹³ HRANA, Dr Foad Moghaddam, a BIHE lecturer, imprisoned, 17 January 2013, at: <https://hra-news.org/fa/religious-minorities/1-13409>

²¹⁴ Jaras, Keyvan Rahimian's letter from prison to his daughter, 7 October 2013, at:
<http://www.rahesabz.net/story/76516/>

²¹⁵ PCED, Kamran Rahimian and Faran Hesami sentenced to four years in prison, 31 January 2012, at:
<http://www.edu-right.net/news/36-news/853-kamran-faran>

²¹⁶ Iran: Amnesty International's submission to the Commission on the Status of Women regarding concerns about the harassment and imprisonment of women, including rights defenders and members of minorities, in Iran, (MDE 13/054/2012) 2 August 2012,
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/054/2012/en>

²¹⁷ Amnesty International, Iran: Joint statement on the right to education and academic freedom in Iran (Index: MDE 13/033/2012, 31 May 2012), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/033/2012/en>

²¹⁸ "We are ordered to crush you": expanding repression of dissent in Iran (Index MDE 13/002/2012, February 2012), at <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/002/2012>; and <http://www.bic.org/node/907>

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²²¹ Interviewed on 11 April 2013 via Skype.

²²² See Ramin Jahanbegloo's website at: <http://jahanbegloo.com/>

²²³ Amnesty International, Urgent Action, Iran: Further information on incommunicado detention/ fear for safety/possible prisoner of conscience: Ramin Jahanbegloo (m), (Index: MDE 13/119/2006, 12 October 2006) at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/119/2006/en>

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²⁹⁸ According to Article 2.1 of the ICESCR "Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take

steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.

²⁹⁹ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 9, The Domestic Application of the Covenant, 3 December 1998, para 3

³⁰⁰ See Article 2.3 of the ICCPR.

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³⁰² Article 222, Prison Regulations.

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SILENCED, EXPELLED, IMPRISONED

REPRESSION OF STUDENTS AND ACADEMICS IN IRAN

The eight year presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) sounded the death knell for academic freedom in Iran. Official policies aimed at “Islamicization” saw the universities drawn under tighter state control, purged of critical voices and eviscerated as centres of independent thought.

Student dissenters faced being officially “starred”, suspended or banned from university study. Academics deemed “secular” were fired or forced into retirement. Some campuses were rigidly segregated to minimize “mingling” of the sexes and authorities enforced rigid dress and behaviour codes on students and staff alike. An official quota system barred female students from certain courses. Meanwhile, Bahai’s, against whom the authorities discriminate, continued to be excluded from state higher education.

Conditions worsened after widespread protests against President Ahmadinejad’s re-election in 2009 in which many students and academics participated. The authorities launched a brutal crackdown against dissent in which they made the universities a prime target, and quelled the protests using excessive force, mass arrests, detentions, torture and unfair trials, including “show” trials.

Iran’s new President, Hassan Rouhani, must urgently address this damaging legacy if he is to restore academic freedom and enable Iranians to freely exchange knowledge and ideas, and so realize their full potential.

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