



Iran – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 5 August 2011

Treatment of green movement protesters/opposition protestors, including arrests/charges/convictions/custodial conditions.

An *Institute for War & Peace Reporting* article states:

“The Green Movement began when millions of people poured into the streets in the belief that Ahmadinejad had rigged the election. The repression that followed forced the movement to retreat underground, but it stayed alive. It sought different arenas in which to pursue its goals and spread deeper into society. Government violence succeeded in reducing the number of street protesters and dispersed the movement. We no longer see millions protesting in unison. The movement has, however, become more difficult to control.” (Institute for War & Peace Reporting (13 November 2009) *Green Movement Spreading Despite Crackdown*)

A report published by the *United States Congressional Research Service*, in a paragraph headed “Green Movement Formation and Activities”, states:

“The opposition ‘Green movement’ grew out of the protests, later moving well beyond that issue into a challenge to the regime. The demonstrations built throughout June 13-19, large in Tehran but also held in other cities. Security forces used varying amounts of force to control them, causing 27 protester deaths (official tally) during that period, with figures from opposition groups running over 100. The protesters’ hopes of having Khamene’i annul the election were dashed by his major Friday prayer sermon on June 19 in which he refuted allegations of vast fraud and threatened a crackdown on further protests. Protesters defied Khamene’i the following day, but faced a crackdown that killed at least 10 protesters.” (United States Congressional Research Service (4 March 2011) *Iran: U.S. Concerns and Policy Responses*, p.13)

An *Amnesty International* report, in a section headed “Post-Election Protests and Repression”, states:

“On 26 June during his Friday prayer sermon, senior cleric Ahmad Khatami, a member of the Assembly of Experts, called on the Judiciary to punish demonstrators ‘severely and without mercy’. He said that agitation and creating insecurity and terror, among other things, could be considered to be ‘moharebeh’, or enmity against God, an offence which can be punished by death. By mid-August, the authorities indicated that around 4,000 people had been arrested, of whom 3,700 had been released. Meanwhile, it was widely alleged that shopkeepers whose property was damaged during the unrest were being offered compensation if they lodged written complaints against unspecified supporters of Mir Hossein Mousavi or Mehdi Karroubi. Similarly, many of those injured by security forces who needed hospital treatment were told that they would be transferred to prison and charged unless they made written complaints saying that they had been shot or otherwise injured by supporters of the rival candidates. The repression has not eased up since the protests died down. In fact, there is every sign that long-standing methods of repression have been

consolidated so that anyone who dares speak out is more likely to be detained arbitrarily, tortured or otherwise ill-treated to coerce a 'confession' and tried unfairly, and any public demonstrations are more likely to be met by state violence. On 18 September, for example, opposition supporters, many wearing green, crowded onto the streets for the annual Qods Day rallies, shouting slogans against the government and human rights violations. They clashed with security forces, which had warned the day before that anyone seeking disorder or to disrupt the rallies would be 'decisively confronted'. Police later said that 35 people were arrested in Tehran" (Amnesty International (10 December 2009) *Iran: Election Contested, Repression Compounded*, pp.19-20)

A *Human Rights Watch* report, in a section titled "Violence against Peaceful Protestors Following the Election", states:

"Tehran was the locus of the largest post-election demonstrations, and there protestors faced the biggest show of governmental force. On June 15, three days after the vote, hundreds of thousands of supporters of Mir Hossein Mousavi, the main opposition candidate, turned out for a mass rally at Azadi Square. Although some protestors engaged in acts of vandalism, the demonstrators were overwhelmingly peaceful. Making no distinction between the two, security forces attacked demonstrators aided by motorcyclist in plainclothes, believed to be Basij members." (Human Rights Watch (11 February 2010) *The Islamic Republic at 31. Post-election Abuses Show Serious Human Rights Crisis*, p.4)

This section of the report also states:

"People on the scene implicated individuals in plainclothes, believed to be Basij, in attacks that killed peaceful demonstrators. The shooting of Neda Agha-Soltan was one of the first such incidents. On June 20, Sultan, 26, was on her way to join demonstrations at Azadi Square. She was shot after she and two companions got out of their car on Karegar Street. Some officials blamed her death on protestors, opposition groups, and foreign powers. Authorities forced the family to bury Agha-Soltan without conducting an autopsy or investigation. A relative told Human Rights Watch that authorities told the family they would face terrible consequences if they challenged the government's version of her death. They also prohibited the family from holding a public funeral. The government has not carried out any investigation into the killing of Neda Agha-Soltan," (ibid, p.5)

This section refers to casualties as follows;

"At least 40 others died during the post-election crackdown in the month of June. Due to the government's lack of transparency, the actual number of casualties – both those killed and injured – remains unknown. Among the confirmed dead, it is not clear how many died as a result of wounds sustained during demonstrations or while in detention." (ibid, pp.5-6)

In a section titled "Abuse of Detainees: Beatings, Forced Confessions, and Rape" this report states:

"On August 13, Judiciary spokesman Ali Reza Jamshidi acknowledged that the authorities detained some 4,000 people in the post-election protests.¹⁰ This number included more than one hundred journalists, prominent political figures, and human rights defenders. Both ordinary and well-known individuals faced harsh treatment and were denied any semblance of due process." (ibid, p.8)

In this section of the report one detainee describes her experiences as follows:

“A woman who was apprehended near Baharestan Square on June 17 and later taken to Shapour police station described the conditions of her detention:

There was a fluorescent lamp that didn't really help us to distinguish day from night. There was no soap. They confiscated all our personal belongings. It was hard to lay down or sleep. We were not allowed to use restrooms when we needed to. In Tehran's hot weather, we were deprived of a fan or water. They interrogated us. If anyone had a green scarf, shawl, or bracelet indicating that they were Mousavi supporters, their situation was worse. On the last day, I was feeling sick and a female guard came and kicked me a few times to stop me from crying.

Protesters sent to Evin prison faced similar situation. Three released detainees told Human Rights Watch that due to lack of space, every small solitary confinement cell held five prisoners.” (ibid, p.8)

See also *Human Rights Watch* report which states:

“The parliament set up the Special Parliamentary Committee to Investigate the Status of Post-Election Arrestees in July to investigate allegations of torture and abuse of detainees arrested in the post-election crackdown. The panel's report says that Mortazavi claimed that his decision to send detainees to Kahrizak stemmed from a lack of space at Evin Prison, in northern Tehran. But authorities at Evin told the panel that their prison had been ready to accept the prisoners. The panel concluded that Mortazavi's decision to transfer protestors to Kahrizak was ‘not justifiable even if Evin did not have the capacity’ to take them. The panel found that abuse of prisoners in Kahrizak included beatings; verbal abuse and humiliation; lack of appropriate food and drink; lack of ventilation; and severe overcrowding. It held Mortazavi responsible for the deaths of three detainees: Mohsen Ruhai Amini, Amir Javadifar, and Mohammed Kamrani.” (Human Rights Watch (13 January 2010) *Iran: Prosecute Mortazavi for Detention Deaths*)

An article from *The Guardian* states:

“The green tide has been reversed by a crackdown that has seen an estimated 5,000 people arrested since last June and 115 executed this year alone. Opposition groups say at least 80 have died in street clashes and in detention, although the real death toll may be far higher. At least six political detainees are on death row after being convicted of mohareb (waging war against God) for their alleged role in the demonstrations. Activists capable of organising protests have been detained or intimidated into silence and passivity. Leading reformists – such as Karroubi's former aide, Mohammad Ali Abtahi – have been given lengthy prison sentences after televised show trials before being released on onerous bail conditions. Many activists have fled to neighbouring countries such as Turkey. Turkish refugee officials have acknowledged the arrival of around 4,000 Iranians since last June, though some sources suggest that is an underestimate. Former detainees complain of brutal and degrading treatment, including alleged rape and sodomy. One man, who fled to Turkey, said he was dumped in the street and left for dead after sexual assault. The award-winning film-maker Jafar Panahi – detained in Evin prison for two months until his release on 25 May – described being made to strip naked and stand outside for an hour and a half in the middle of the night.” (The Guardian (9 June 2010) *Iran election anniversary protests face severe crackdown*)

An *Institute for War & Peace Reporting* article states:

“The reformist parties which took on Ahmadinejad in last year’s presidential election have paid a high price, and at present are struggling to survive let alone fight future elections. Key members were arrested and jailed during the post-election unrest, and all their websites and newspapers were closed down.” (Institute for War & Peace Reporting (19 November 2010) *Iranian Opposition Struggles to Survive*)

See also *Institute for War & Peace Reporting* article which states:

“Over the 15 months since the disputed presidential polls, the Green Movement has been systematically suppressed. Major reformist parties like the Participation Front, the Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution, and the National Confidence Party, have been outlawed by the judiciary, while the Executives of Construction Party is now dormant. Rank-and-file opposition supporters have not dared appear in street protests in many months. Former officials who served as advisers to Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, another presidential candidate and Green Movement leader, are either in detention or under surveillance.” (Institute for War & Peace Reporting (15 October 2010) *Harassment of Iranian Opposition Leaders*)

A *Human Rights Watch* report which describes the treatment of demonstrators in Tehran in February 2011 states:

“A demonstrator who participated in demonstrations close to Tehran’s Enghelab Square told Human Rights Watch: ‘Security forces had occupied the demonstration routes earlier in the morning. But after 3 p.m. their numbers increased dramatically... Around 3:30 we arrived close to Enghelab Square. There were about 500 of us. For about 10 minutes we chanted some light slogans. After that the riot police attacked us and we were forced to move toward Avesta Park. When we entered the park, they began lobbing teargas at us.’ The demonstrator told Human Rights Watch that he saw many people with injured arms and legs. He said this was mostly the result of blows from riot police and paramilitary basij forces carrying batons and sticks, and that they struck him with a baton at least once. He also said that he saw about 10 demonstrators who were separated from the main crowds and taken to unknown locations. According to the semi-official Fars News Agency, a pro-government media outlet, at least one protester was killed. Human Rights Watch has not been able to verify this information independently. It is not known how many people were arrested throughout the country.” (Human Rights Watch (14 February 2011) *Iran: Stop Attacks on Peaceful Demonstrators*)

An *Economist Intelligence Unit* country report on Iran states:

“Iran experienced its part of the political and social unrest spreading across the Middle East in February. Demonstrations on February 14th in the capital, Tehran, were organised by Iran’s opposition Green Movement, apparently inspired by and in solidarity with protesters in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere across the Arab world. During the protests, two students were killed and 1,500 arrested. Websites linked to the opposition said that the police made arrests and used tear gas to control the unrest.” (Economist Intelligence Unit (14 March 2011) *The political scene: Green Movement returns to the streets*)

A *Human Rights Watch* report states:

“In response to a request from the Council for the Coordination of the Green Path of Hope (the Council), an opposition body, thousands of Iranians filled the streets of Tehran and other major cities on March 1 to protest the house arrest of opposition leaders Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi. Security forces, including riot police and *basij* militias, outnumbered demonstrators in many parts of Tehran and attacked them with teargas, batons, and gunshot pellets. Witnesses have told Human Rights Watch that most of the security forces attacks appeared to be efforts to prevent crowds from forming and chanting slogans. Dozens were arrested, the witnesses said.” (Human Rights Watch (3 March 2011) *Iran: End Violence Against Protesters*)

A *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* report states:

“Arrests and clashes have been reported in Tehran on the anniversary of the disputed 2009 reelection of Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad that led to mass street protests. Opposition websites and witnesses say dozens were arrested in the Iranian capital on June 12 while marching silently to mark the anniversary. The opposition Kalame website reported that several hundred Iranians were detained on Vali Asr Street while marching peacefully.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (13 June 2011) *Silent Tehran Protesters Arrested On Anniversary Of Disputed Vote*)

A *New Perspectives Quarterly* article on the current status of the Green Movement states:

“In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak is under arrest. But in Iran, the two defeated candidates in the disputed presidential elections of June 2009 who played such an important role in giving birth to the Green Movement Mir Hossein Mousavi a former prime minister, and Mehdi Karroubi, a cleric and a former parliament speaker are the ones under house arrest and denied any contact with the outside world. Unlike their predictions and those of many Iranian dissidents and protestors, the hardliners and especially the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps appeared in a far stronger position. What happened? And where does Iran's Green Movement stand two years later? No doubt, the price of speaking truth to power was higher than expected for the Iranian civic actors. It resulted in massive arrests, Stalinist-style show trials, torture, rape and murder. Also, the nature of Iran's system, with its power split between two centers the president and the supreme leader has complicated and slowed down the process of change.” (New Perspectives Quarterly (14 June 2011) *Iran's Green Movement: Two Years Later*)

A *Wall Street Journal* article states:

“Two years after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's fraudulent re-election to the Iranian presidency, it would be fair to say that Iran's pro-democracy reform movement is on the ropes. Key leaders of the Green Movement have vanished from public view, confined to house arrest or simply 'disappeared' by the regime. Protesters, having been systematically bloodied at the hands of Iran's *basij* militia, have retreated to the Internet for virtual dissent. The authorities have followed them there, erecting an increasingly draconian web-filtering system aimed at isolating dissidents from each other and from the outside world.” (Wall Street Journal (20 July 2011) *A Green Manifesto for Iran*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any

particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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