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# **IRAN: Religious persecution and issues – Monthly Digest June**

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### **Christians**

**Three Christian women held incommunicado for 40 days face court hearing on unknown charges**

Article 18 (30.06.2023) – Three Iranian women converts to

Christianity arrested last month and held incommunicado in Tehran's Evin Prison for 40 days face a court hearing on Sunday on unknown charges, according to a US-based Christian organisation.

**Shilan Oraminejad, Razieh (Maral) Kohzady, and Zahra (Yalda) Heidary** were arrested in their homes early in the morning of 9 May by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence, who claimed to have search warrants and confiscated personal belongings including mobile phones, laptops, books, and pamphlets "without any explanation", according to Mehr Ministries.

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### **Convert flogged for second time, now faces exile**

Article 18 (27.06.2023) – A house-church leader who has already spent nearly five years in prison, and was once flogged for drinking Communion wine, has been flogged a second time and now faces two years in exile.

Zaman Fadaie, who is known as Saheb, was flogged again on Sunday, 25 June, having travelled from his home in Rasht, northern Iran, to Tehran in the hope of securing the release of a property deed submitted long ago for his bail.

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### **'I didn't know worshipping and praying in Jesus' name was illegal'**

Article 18 (12.06.2023) – When he was arrested, **Vahid Hakani** told his interrogator he hadn't known until that day "that gathering and worshipping and praying in the name of Christ is not legal in Iran".

His interrogator wanted him to confess that he was part of a “deviant Christian sect”, and pledge to no longer have any more interactions with other house-church members.

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## **Baha'is**

### **Baha'i Citizen Hooshidar Zarei sentenced to six years imprisonment**

Iran Press Watch (30.06.2023) – The Shiraz Revolutionary Court has sentenced Baha'i citizen **Hooshidar Zarei** to six years in prison, along with additional penalties, including a two-year travel ban, a fine, and other social restrictions. If the verdict is upheld on appeal, Zarei will serve five years of his sentence under house arrest, monitored by an electronic tag.

Zarei received a one-year sentence for “propaganda against the regime” and five years for “sectarian propaganda in favor of anti-regime groups.” He will serve his sentence at his residence, with the limitation of movement within a one-kilometer radius from his house.

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### **Baha'i couple faces nine-year and six-month combined sentence**

Iran Press Watch (30.06.2023) – According to the verdict issued on June 13 by Branch 3 of the Rasht Revolutionary Court, Mrs. Samieian received a sentence of seven months and 16 days for “propaganda against the regime,” along with three years and six months for “engaging in educational activities and propaganda against Sharia law.” Meanwhile, Mr. Momtazi has been sentenced to seven months and 16 days for “propaganda against the regime,” one year and three months for “insulting the Supreme Leader of Iran,” and three years and six months

for “insulting Sharia law.” In addition, he has been fined 38 million tomans. Both individuals are also subjected to social deprivations for a period of ten years. If these verdicts are upheld on appeal, each of them will serve three years and six months in prison.

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### **Baha’i Citizen Sara Sabet Rasekh receives eight-year prison sentence**

Iran Press Watch (30.06.2023) – The Court of Appeals in Isfahan Province has handed down a verdict, sentencing Baha’i citizen **Sara Sabet Rasekh** to eight years in prison. Since February 7, 2023, Sabet has been serving her previous one-year sentence outside of prison with curfew tags.

The recent ruling states that Sabet will serve five years for charges of “blasphemy,” two years for “insulting the former and current Supreme Leader of Iran,” and one year for “propaganda against the regime.” Pursuant to Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, she will serve five years in prison for the first charge.

Sabet was arrested in November-December 2021 by security forces at his residence and released on bail after about one month.

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### **Baha’i sentenced to six years in prison and assets seized**

Iran Press Watch (22.06.2023) – **Hami Bahadori**, a 26-year-old Baha’i citizen, was transferred to Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on Wednesday, 21 June, without the knowledge of his lawyer and family and sentenced to six years

in prison, IranWire reports.

The court session concluded with an immediate announcement of the verdict. Bahadori was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of “gathering and collusion,” with an additional one-year prison term for spreading “propaganda against the Islamic Republic under the guise of preaching for Baha’is.”

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### **Who were the perpetrators of the mass execution of 10 Baha’i women in Shiraz in 1983?**

Iran Press Watch (21.06.2023) – When the news came of the mass execution of 10 Baha’i women in June 1983 in Shiraz, it was widely understood that a number of individuals were involved in various levels as “perpetrators” of this heinous act. From the Shiraz Revolutionary Guards Corps to the various officials involved, whether in an official capacity such as prosecutors of arrested individuals or through engagement in propaganda, or through the complicity of silence.

The Shiraz Revolutionary Guards Corps, a military-security organization, was intricately involved in all stages of the arrests, interrogation, torture and execution of these women who they detained as part of a government-fueled campaign against the Baha’i community, and certainly should be held accountable.

But the three individuals who stand out as the “main perpetrators” of these executions are Ruhollah Khomeini (former Supreme Leader of Iran); Hujjat al-Islam Ghazaie (Sharia Ruler and President of Shiraz Revolutionary Court); and Zia Miremadi (prosecutor of Shiraz).

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## **Zarrin Moghimi-Abyaneh: A young Baha'i woman executed for her faith**

Iran Press Watch (13.06.2023) – “Tonight I come from Adelabad Prison, the home of free spirits and butterflies who have been consumed by the flames of affection; where inside its high and stony walls spirits greater than its walls are in chains; where each stone cries out in amazement, amazed by nameless heroes whose silent screams pierce the high walls of the dungeons of the tyrants and one day shall pierce the dreams of the wicked and shall awaken the world. I wish to ask these walls: what have you seen? Tell me about the songs of self-sacrifice, of the last beatings of the heart of a lover as he draws near his death. Tell me what they said when they rushed to their martyrdoms. Talk to me of whispered prayers that you hear at dawn, from behind bars, and of the teardrops that fall from their eyes.”

So wrote Zarrin Moghimi-Abyaneh after visiting a prisoner of conscience at Adelabad Prison in Shiraz. Later she herself was arrested and hanged for being a Baha'i.

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## **The Shiraz Baha'i woman executed two days after her son**

Iranwire.com (12.06.2023) – In the face of unimaginable tragedy, Nusrat Ghofrani Yaldaeï, a Baha'i woman from Shiraz, demonstrated unwavering strength and faith. Her story is one of love, persecution, and sacrifice, highlighting the courage and resilience of those who faced persecution for their religious beliefs.

“I made the difficult decision not to inform Nusrat about the execution of our son, Bahram. It had happened two days prior. Whenever Nusrat would meet me, her first question would always be about Bahram's well-being. I would assure her that

everything was fine, concealing the devastating truth. As we bid each other farewell, she whispered to me that they would come for her sooner or later. On that fateful day, following our meeting, Nusrat jan and nine other Baha'i women were separated from the other prisoners and taken to Chowgan field. It was there that Nusrat met her untimely end, just two days after our beloved son's execution. I often wonder if Nusrat had learned of Bahram's fate in the remaining moments of her life. Perhaps one of the other women had shared the news along the way."

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### **Detention of followers of the minority Baha'i faith**

ohchr.org (09.06.2023) – The detention by the de facto authorities in Sana'a (a.k.a Huthis or Ansar Allah) of a group of followers of the minority Baha'i faith and a subsequent sermon by Shamseddin Sharafeddin, the Mufti in Sana'a, inciting hatred against the Baha'is and other religious groups are matters of serious concern.

Our Office urges the immediate release of the 16 people still being held incommunicado, and we condemn the use of any language that incites discrimination and violence, particularly against minorities, and often leads to forced exile and displacement.

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### **Jailed Baha'is endure coercion and await verdicts**

Iran Press watch (06.06.2023) Four imprisoned members of the Baha'i religious minority in Iran have been subjected to coercive measures by interrogators, pressuring them to make confessions on camera, IranWire reports.

The actions occurred during the trial of the four citizens on

May 31 at Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court. Judge Iman Afshari presided over the proceedings, and the defendants are currently awaiting the court's verdict.

**Shadi Shahidzadeh, Valiullah Ghadamian, Mansour Amini and Ataulлах Zafar** were transferred to Tehran Revolutionary Court after two weeks of detention in Ward 209 of Evin Prison.

Ghadamian, Amini and Zafar are known assisting other Baha'is in Tehran with the burial of deceased loved ones in the city's Baha'i cemetery. But they were arrested in recent weeks as part of an ongoing effort by a Ministry of Intelligence agent to hinder the Baha'is from using their own cemetery.

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#### **From HRWF Database of Baha'i prisoners in Iran**

All in all, over one thousand Baha'is are either behind bars, or in custody, or under house arrest, or waiting for a hearing or to be summoned by a court.

HRWF database only contains cases of prisoners who had started serving their sentence after a final court decision and who have not been released since then.

**ALAVI, Farid**

**BAHADORI, Hami**

**BAHRAMI, Shaghayegh**

**BAKHT, Nima Mahin**

**BASIRI, Bardia**

**DARABI, Negar**

**ESLAMI, Shafigh**

**GHODRAT, Mona**



**GHOLAMI, Shayan**

**GHOLINEJAD, Samiyeh**

**GORJI, Matin**

**HAGHIGHI, Bita**

**HAJIPOUR, Nakisa**

**HASHEMI, Hanan**

**IGHANI, Negar**

**KHANEH-ZARIN, Shaghayegh**

**KHANJANI, Shahdokht**

**KHANLORI, Homayoun**

**MANAVIPOUR, Mishak**

**MOMTAZI, Vesal**

**NAEIMI, Afif**

**NASRABADI, Zhila Sharafi**

**PAKZAD, Ghazal**

**PAKZAD, Reyhaneh**

**SABETI, Saha**

**SARAF, Pooya**

**SHADPOUR, Nematollah**

**SHADPOUR, Nima**

**SHAHIDI, Nahaleh**

**SHARIFI, Amin**

TAFAZOLI, Sanaz

ZABIHI, Armaghan

ZABIHI, Sirous

ZAMANI, Arash

See the details of each case of Baha'i, Christian and Muslim prisoners [HERE](#) on our website.

More important: Think of them, remember them, read their stories and speak about them.

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