

FAITH UNDER SIEGE

Documenting the Crackdown Against Religious Minorities in Iran After the 12-Day War

NUFDI

ARMITA HOOMAN, DECEMBER 2025

ABOUT NUFDI

The National Union for Democracy in Iran (NUFDI) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the Iranian-American community in pursuit of a U.S. policy toward Iran based on the values of human rights and democracy.



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Author's Notes

Whenever Ali Khamenei loses a battle, he takes revenge on our children.

— Gohar Eshghi, mother of slain Iranian blogger Sattar Beheshti

For over four decades, the fear described in the quote above has stalked Iranians. Every time the Islamic Republic faces an external threat, it cranks up oppression at home. Every crisis is used as justification to tighten surveillance and intensify human rights violations, with the most marginalized groups, like the religious minorities, always getting the brunt of state violence.

The 12-Day War, which began on June 12, 2025, has been no different. In just over two months, Islamic Republic security forces arrested[1] more than 21,000 people for "espionage," "ties to the exiled opposition," or simply "sharing unauthorized footage of the war" on social media. But behind each statistic is a person, a name, a face, a life. While the world is preparing to celebrate Chanukah and Christmas, religious minorities in Iran are being tortured, forcibly disappeared, detained, and persecuted just for the "crime" of following their faith.

What initially grabbed our attention was the statement published[2] by the Ministry of Intelligence. In this statement, the Ministry portrays several religious minorities as threats linked to foreign conspiracies. It accuses the Baha'i community of acting under the direction of its center in Haifa, Israel, framing them as agents in a "Zionist–monarchist project." The statement also distinguishes between "loyal" Christian minorities (Armenians and Assyrians) and Christian converts, whom it labels as "Zionist missionaries" tied to churches outside of Iran, claiming to have arrested 53 of them and even falsely alleging the discovery of weapons. Groups of converts are lumped together with opposition groups, all described as tools of the U.S. and Israel.

This report restores what repression tries to take away: individuality. Focusing on those with the least voice, this booklet portrays members of religious minorities who were persecuted after the 12-Day War broke out. These profiles, gathered by NUFDI from credible human rights sources, represent only a fraction of the silenced. Here we share the names, faces, and stories of Iranians targeted in this latest episode of a decades-long campaign of eradication. Each profile is an act of remembrance and resistance.

May these pages serve as a testimony and a call for freedom and equality for all Iranians.

Quick Facts

The Islamic Republic's constitution enshrines[3] Twelver Ja'afari Shia Islam as the state religion and requires all laws to conform to sharia.

Before 1979, despite being a Muslim majority country, Iran's secular legal framework allowed[4] members of all faiths to hold senior positions in both the public and private sectors. Today, however, more than 98 percent of official and managerial positions in public institutions are held[5] by Muslims, predominantly Shia. Non-Muslims are legally barred from inheriting land from Muslims, receive reduced compensation in cases of injury or death, and are prohibited from marrying Muslim women.

In addition to Islam, the Constitution officially recognizes[6] only Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity as legal religions.

Other largely believed religions, like Baha'i and Sufism, face[7] severe, are not recognized and are systematically persecuted by the regime, which views them as threats to its Shia Islamist ideology.

- Iran's officially recognized Christian population is claimed[8] to be more than 100,000. However, Christianity, as the fastest-growing faith in Iran, has more than 1,000,000 followers, including Christian converts who are not recognized by the regime.
- Printing, publishing, and distributing Bibles, particularly in the national Persian language, is restricted greatly under the Islamic Republic law.
- Before 1979, Iran had a Jewish community of more than 120,000 people[9], many of whom were forced to emigrate following the regime's targeted harassment. According to the Tehran Jewish Committee, Iran's Jewish population has since declined 92 percent,[10] to approximately 9,000.
- The Baha'i population in Iran is estimated to be 300,000.[11]

Converting from Islam is not legally permitted[12] and is considered[13] a crime in the Islamic Penal Code, punishable by severe penalties, including imprisonment or the death penalty.

The penal code enforces[14] hudud (punishments) such as flogging, amputation, and stoning, while prescribing the death penalty for crimes like moharebeh (enmity against Allah), blasphemy, and apostasy, which are punishable by death.

The U.S. designated Iran[15] a "Country of Particular Concern" for severe religious freedom violations.

There is a systematic pattern of raids on the religious minorities' houses as part of a state-sponsored campaign of persecution:[16, 17]

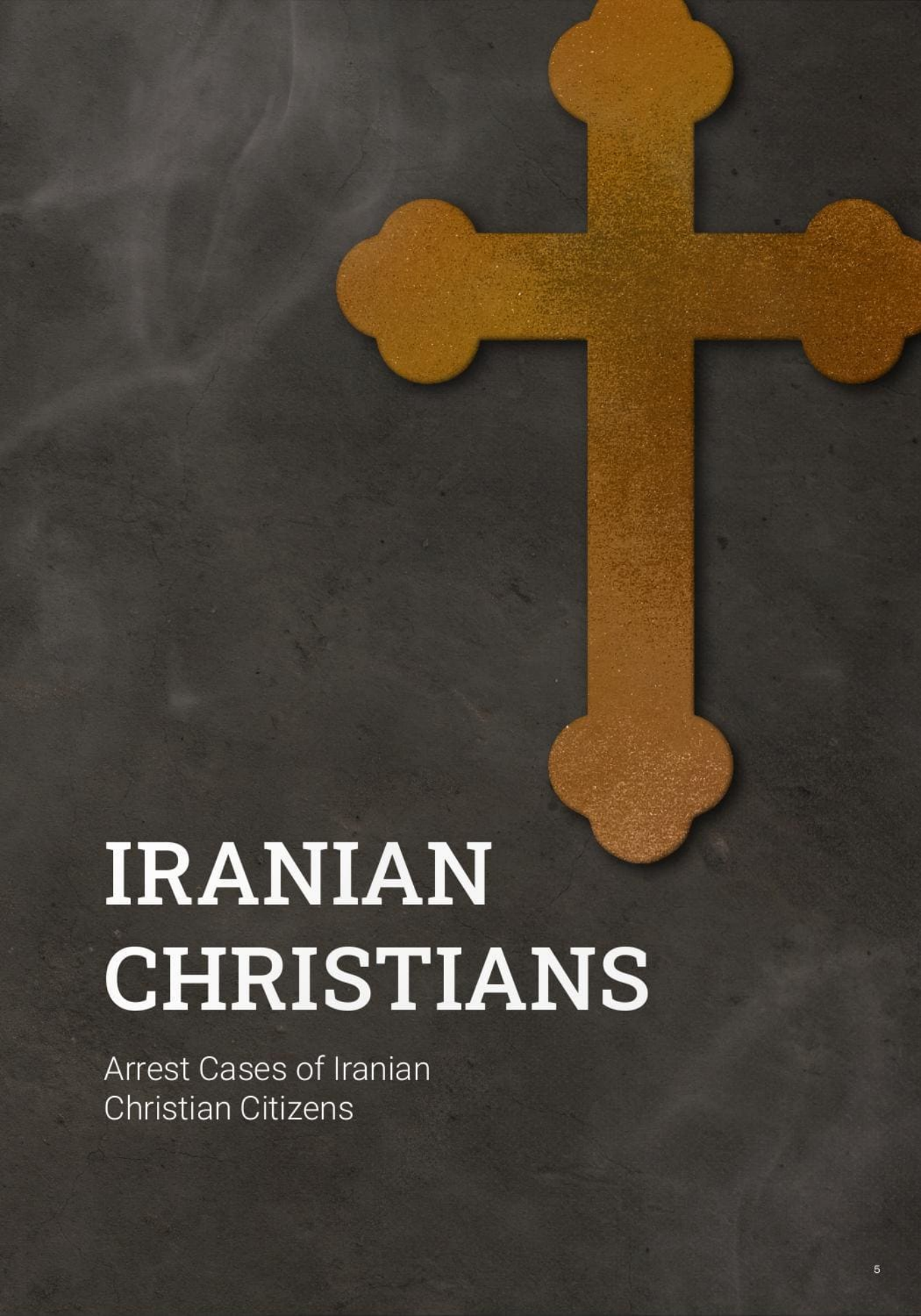
- Raids are frequently carried out without prior notice, legal warrants, or explanation.
- Authorities often confiscate belongings and later invent charges like "acting against national security" or "propaganda against the state."
- Operations are often timed for the early hours of the morning or late at night to catch individuals disoriented.
- Security officers use force, verbal insults, physical and psychological abuse, threats, and armed intimidation, posing a serious threat to all occupants, including the elderly and minors.
- The raids are not isolated incidents but a coordinated wave across multiple provinces.
- Authorities routinely seize personal belongings, property, cash, jewelry, and business equipment.
- Officers often confiscate cell phones from residents and neighbors to prevent the documentation of their actions.

After detention, detainees commonly face pressure to forced confessions, sign statements, provide passwords, or inform on others; access to counsel is often limited in practice.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom has reported significant patterns of state Sexual and gender-based violence:[18]

- Sexual violence is used systematically in detention settings, including police stations, prisons, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps intelligence facilities, and unofficial detention sites.
- Sexual violence is employed to force confessions, extract information, and punish religious dissent, often accompanied by physical torture and solitary confinement.
- Women, men, and minors are all victims, with documented cases of rape, sexual assault, threats of rape, genital torture, and forced nudity during arrest and detention.
- Religious minority women face heightened abuse due to state propaganda portraying them as sexually "deviant" or "impure."

Officials actively cover up abuses, denying allegations, discrediting survivors, and spreading misinformation through state media and diplomatic channels.



IRANIAN CHRISTIANS

Arrest Cases of Iranian Christian Citizens

In the memory of Parviz (Arastu) Sayah Sina, an early victim of extrajudicial Killing by the Islamic Republic



Eight days after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, on February 19, Parviz (Arastu) Sayah Sina, a Christian church leader, was brutally murdered in his office at Simon the Zealot Church in Shiraz.[19] Two men associated with the Shiraz Islamic Association, who had presented themselves as seekers of Christianity, had been visiting and speaking with him. On the day of the killing, they entered his office as they had before. When Sayah Sina did not return home, his worried son went looking for him and found his father dead. His carotid artery had been cut with a knife; a bullet and a note lay beside his body, though the contents of the note were never made public.

While newspapers reported arrests, the identities and affiliations of the suspects were never clarified, and responsibility was publicly deflected onto alleged CIA-linked agents. Despite an investigation by the Shiraz Prosecutor's Office, the perpetrators were never identified or prosecuted. Sayah Sina was the first of several Christian church leaders murdered after the revolution. In the aftermath, church-affiliated hospitals in Shiraz and Isfahan were confiscated, staff dismissed, and church assets seized by revolutionary courts. Facing intimidation and insecurity following his extrajudicial killing, Sayah Sina's family was ultimately forced to flee Iran for Europe.

Members of the Christian faith



Iranian Christians practicing their faith



An underground Church in Iran

While the state formally recognizes historic Armenian and Assyrian Christian communities, their churches operate under heavy surveillance and administrative constraints, and many Armenians face consistent persecution.

Civil and criminal statutes explicitly discriminate against Christians. They are entitled to lower compensation in car accident settlements and are barred from inheriting property from Muslims.[20] Several offenses that carry corporal punishment for Muslims are punishable by death when committed by Christians.

Since 1979, hundreds of Christians have been arbitrarily detained, threatened with apostasy charges, execution, or assassination, and left legally vulnerable under judges' discretionary application of Islamic law, with the state showing little accountability in cases of suspicious deaths.

Persian-language services and outreach to Muslims are prohibited, clergy and congregations face frequent monitoring by security organizations, and church activities, from building repairs to holiday gatherings, often require prior approval.

Christians also report pressure in employment and education, restrictions on printing or importing religious materials, and periodic raids around major religious holidays.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic does not legally recognize conversion from Islam. Authorities characterize it as apostasy and frequently prosecute converts under national-security provisions.

However, Christianity is the fastest-growing faith in Iran, with an estimated more than 1,000,000 Christian converts. [21, 22]

Out of concern for reprisals, including torture and harassment, many of those detained have not been publicly identified.

Who got Arrested and Where?

After the war with Israel, the Islamic Republic's Ministry of Intelligence admitted arresting more than 50 Christians, accusing them of being "Mossad mercenaries" trained abroad under the guise of evangelical movements. [23]

Human Rights groups stress that these arrests are scapegoating meant to deflect from the regime's failures during the conflict, noting that detainees face torture, denial of legal representation, and fabricated security charges. While some of the 54 arrested have been released on bail, over 40 remain in detention, nearly doubling the number of Christians already facing prosecution or imprisonment for their faith. [24]



Map of Arrested Christians in Iran for Alleged Espionage Charges



Aida Najafloo

آیدا نجفلو

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
February 6, 2025

LOCATION
Tehran, Tehran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Arbitrary Detention, Lack of Due Process, Right to Seek Medical Aid

Aida Najafloo is sentenced to 17 years of prison. [25] The charges were based on activities explicitly cited by the prosecutor, including hosting a house church, participating in prayer meetings, baptism, communion, and celebrating Christmas. She was held for 65 days under interrogation in Ward 209 of Evin Prison, with bail set at an exceptionally punitive 110 billion rials ($100,000). During detention, she suffered serious medical neglect. Despite a prior history of spinal surgery, she sustained fractured vertebrae after falling from a prison bed and was returned to custody despite medical recommendations for urgent surgery, placing her at risk of permanent paralysis. She is a mother of two children, one of whom has a serious illness, further compounding the humanitarian concerns raised by her continued detention.



Lida Alexany

لیدا الکسانی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
February 6, 2025

LOCATION
Tehran, Tehran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Arbitrary Detention, Lack of Due Process

Lida Alexany was sentenced to 8 years in prison in connection with her peaceful Christian faith and religious activities. [26] She was arrested on February 6, 2025, alongside other Christian believers, despite the government's repeated public claims that Armenian Christians enjoy full religious freedom. Alexany is the wife of Joseph Shahbazian, himself sentenced to a lengthy prison term, highlighting the targeting of entire families. She was held in detention until her temporary release on May 13, 2025, after posting bail set at 40 billion rial ($36,000). Her arrest and conviction underscore the contradiction between the state's official narrative of religious tolerance toward Armenians and its actual practice of prosecuting and imprisoning them for nonviolent religious expression.



Joseph Shahbazia ژوزف شهبازیان

AGE
61

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
February 6, 2025

LOCATION
Tehran, Tehran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Arbitrary Detention, Lack of Due Process

Joseph Shahbazian was sentenced to ten years in prison solely for his peaceful Christian religious activities, specifically for evangelizing among Persian-speaking Christians and converts. [27] According to the officials, his so-called "criminal acts" consisted of sharing the Gospel in Persian, which the indictment portrays as a threat to national security; the prosecutor further claimed that Shahbazian "takes pride in his criminal actions," referring explicitly to his religious beliefs and missionary activity. He was arrested on February 6, 2025, during coordinated security raids on Christian households and has been held without the possibility of bail, indicating an apparent intent by authorities to ensure his continued detention. His case is particularly notable given that his wife is an Armenian Christian, underscoring the contradiction between the Islamic Republic's public assertions that Armenians enjoy full religious freedom and its actual practice of prosecuting and imprisoning Christians for nonviolent religious expression.



Nasser Navard Goltapeh

ناصر نورد گل‌تپه

AGE
64

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
February 6, 2025

LOCATION
Tehran, Tehran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Arbitrary Detention, Lack of Due Process

Nasser Navard Goltapeh was sentenced to ten years in prison on charges stemming from his peaceful Christian faith, including allegations that he had repeatedly obtained and kept a Persian-language Bible in his home. [28] He has previously spent more than five years in prison for the same reason. In protest of the authorities' treatment of Christian converts, he undertook a 35-day hunger strike and was later transferred to a hospital with symptoms reported as suspicious of a stroke. His bail was initially set at 100 billion rials ($90,000) and then raised to 300 billion rials ($270,000).



Morteza Calvin Faghanpour Sasi

مرتضی (کلوین) فقانپور ساسی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 15, 2025

LOCATION
Varamin, Tehran

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Violation of Freedom of Expression, Arbitrary Arrest, Arbitrary Detention

Morteza (Calvin) Faghanpour Sassi, a Christian convert, was arrested on the street by security officers. [29] Following his arrest, officers raided his home, confiscating several Bibles, evangelistic booklets, a cell phone, and Christian images and crosses displayed on the walls.

He was immediately transferred to Evin Prison, held one month prison where he faced intense interrogations and physical torture. Unable to post bail, he spent four additional months in another part of the prison before being temporarily released on two salary slips.

The charges against him included "illegal distribution of Christian literature," "participation in foreign online theological courses to learn evangelism," and "posting an insulting caricature of the Supreme Leader on social media." The Varamin Revolutionary Court sentenced him to eight years and eleven months in prison.



Hesamoddin (Yahya) Mohammad Joneidi

حسام‌الدین (یحیی) محمد جنیدی

AGE
45

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 15, 2025

LOCATION
Varamin, Tehran

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Arbitrary Detention, Excessive Bail as Punishment, Torture

Christian convert from Varamin, was sentenced to eight years and one month in prison for his faith and peaceful religious activities.[30] He received seven years and six months for "propaganda against Islam through contact with foreign entities" and an additional seven months for "propaganda against the regime."

Jonidi was arrested in November 2024 during coordinated raids by Ministry of Intelligence officers on the homes and workplaces of several Christian converts in Varamin. During the arrest, officers confiscated his personal belongings, including Bibles, a laptop, three mobile phones, and 500 million rial in cash.

He was detained for forty days at Evin Prison, controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence, where he endured intense and repeated interrogations before being temporarily released on 1.5 billion toman bail.

The charges against him were based on his participation in Christian training courses abroad (in Turkey), attendance in online and house churches, and sharing his faith both online and in person.



Abolfazl (Benjamin) Ahmadzadeh Khajani

ابولفضل (بنیامین) احمدزاده خانجانی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 15, 2025

LOCATION
Varamin, Tehran

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Arbitrary Detention, Violation of Freedom of Expression

A Christian convert from Varamin was sentenced to seven years and six months in prison for "engaging in educational and evangelistic activities contrary to Islamic law through connections abroad," and an additional seven months for "propaganda against the regime." [31]

The charges were based on his participation in foreign online theological programs, distribution of Christian literature, and sharing of a caricature of the Supreme Leader on social media. Another portion of his case, on the charge of insulting the sacred, remains under judicial review.



Hossein (Daniel) Mohammadi

حسین (دانیال) محمدی

AGE
66

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
November 16, 2025

LOCATION
Shahriar, Alborz Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Arbitrary Detention

Hossein (Daniel) Mohammadi, a Christian convert, was arrested during a security raid on December 11, 2023, when approximately 30 Ministry of Intelligence officers stormed a private family gathering of Christians near Shahriar that had been organized to plan Christmas celebrations. [32] His mobile phone and communication devices were confiscated, and he was interrogated on-site before being taken into custody. After 42 days of detention, he was temporarily released on bail set at 20 billion rials ($18,000). On July 2, 2024, the Revolutionary Court of Shahriar convicted him under Article 498 of the Islamic Penal Code for "membership in a group with intent to disrupt national security," sentencing him to two years of imprisonment. His appeal was rejected on January 1, 2025, and a subsequent request for retrial was denied by the Supreme Court. On November 16, 2025, following a summons to enforce the sentence, he reported to the Malard Criminal Enforcement Branch to begin serving his prison term.



Zahra (Hana) Gholami

زهرا (هانا) غلامی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
November 16, 2025

LOCATION
Shahriar, Alborz Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Arbitrary Detention

Zahra (Hana) Gholami, a Christian convert, was arrested on December 11, 2023, during the same Ministry of Intelligence raid targeting a private Christian gathering held to organize Christmas festivities near Shahriar. Along with other attendees, she was subjected to interrogation, and her electronic devices were confiscated. [33] Following searches of her home, she was detained for 42 days before being temporarily released on bail of 20 billion rials ($18,000). On July 2, 2024, the Revolutionary Court of Shahriar convicted her under Article 498 of the Islamic Penal Code, sentencing her to two years' imprisonment for alleged membership in a group deemed a threat to national security. Her conviction was upheld on appeal, and a request for retrial was later rejected by the Supreme Court. On November 16, 2025, she reported to judicial authorities in Malard after receiving a summons to serve her sentence.



IRANIAN JEWS

Arrest Cases of Iranian Jewish Citizens

In the memory of Habib Elghanian, an early victim of the Islamic Republic



Habib (Habibollah) Elghanian was a prominent Iranian Jewish businessman and philanthropist who served as president of the Tehran Jewish Society and was widely regarded as the symbolic leader of Iran's Jewish community in the 1970s. [34] Shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, he was arrested and sentenced to death by an Islamic revolutionary tribunal on falsely alleged charges including corruption, alleged ties to Israel and Zionism, and "friendship with the enemies of Allah." Elghanian was executed by firing squad in Tehran on May 9, 1979, becoming the first Jew and the first major businessman executed by the Council of the Islamic Revolution.

Members of the Jewish faith



A Synagogue in Tehran

Before 1979 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, Iran was considered a safe country for Jews, with a robust and longstanding Jewish community.[35] However, the Islamic Republic's consistent pattern of persecution forced much of this community to emigrate.

Immediately after seizing power, Islamist revolutionaries carried out executions and purges of prominent Jews on fabricated charges such as espionage. Widespread fear of persecution, combined with economic instability and insecurity, triggered a mass exodus, reducing the Jewish population from more than 120,000 to fewer than 20,000 by the early 1980s. [36]

Those who remained were relegated to a "protected but second-class" (dhimmi) status, facing systemic discrimination under the new regime.[37]

Iran's Jewish community is formally recognized as a religious minority. In practice, these institutions operate under close state oversight.

Community leaders face pressure to avoid Hebrew-language instruction beyond liturgical use, interfaith outreach is tightly constrained, and cultural programming, publications, and repairs to religious sites often require prior approvals.

Jewish Iranians also report episodic employment and university barriers, along with scrutiny of charitable funds and religious materials.

Security restrictions intensify around any perceived connection to Israel. Travel to Israel is criminalized, communications with relatives abroad can invite questioning, and public expression, online or offline, about regional conflicts is criminalized.

Following the 12-Day War, communal figures and lay members experienced heightened surveillance, interrogations by intelligence organizations, and warnings against commentary deemed "supportive of Zionism" or "propaganda."

While enforcement varies by locality, the cumulative effect is a climate of intimidation that encourages self-censorship and emigration.

Reports suggest that at least 35 Jewish citizens were arrested on espionage charges. Out of concern for reprisals, including torture and harassment, many of those detained have not been publicly identified.



Kamran (Yehuda) Hekmati

کامران (یهودا) حکمتی

AGE
70

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July

LOCATION
Tehran, Iran

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Arbitrary Detention, Arbitrary Arrest

An Iranian-American Jew, son of Rivka. He was arrested in Tehran during a family visit. [38] According to his family members, authorities cited his visit to Israel 13 years ago for his son's bar mitzvah as the reason for his arrest.



Navid Ruvon

نوید روون

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
March 5, 2025

LOCATION
Shiraz, Fars Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Arbitrary Detention, Arbitrary Arrest

Son of Gila. He was arrested in Shiraz and held at the Ministry of Intelligence and Security detention facility. [39]



Shahab Yousef

شهاب یوسف

AGE
70

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July

LOCATION
Shiraz, Fars Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Arbitrary Detention, Arbitrary Arrest

Son of Zovola. He was arrested in Shiraz, held in the Ministry of Intelligence and Security detention facility. [40] His accusations include allegedly keeping an Israeli flag at home.



Michael (last name unknown) مایکل

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July

LOCATION
Tehran, Iran

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Arbitrary Detention, Arbitrary Arrest

Still under the Ministry of Intelligence and Security detention facility and awaiting a final interrogation session.[41]

Further Persecutions



Homayoun Sameyah Najafabadi visits the Beheshtieh Jewish cemetery in southern Tehran, January 9, 2015

(photo credit: BEHROUZ MEHRI/AFP via Getty Images)

On December 9, 2025, Homayoun Sameyah Najafabadi, the Jewish representative in the Majles (Parliament), said security agencies summoned him after some Iranian Jews liked or commented on what authorities deemed as "Zionist" or "Israeli" content on social media. [42] In an open letter to Iran's Jewish community, he explained that such online activity had raised suspicion among intelligence authorities. He urged community members to delete past comments or likes, avoid similar actions, and unfollow accounts associated with Israel.



IRANIAN BAHA'I

Targeted Individuals in the Baha'i Community

In the memory of the ten young Baha'i victims of regime brutality



On June 18, 1983, the Islamic Republic hanged 10 Baha'i women in a single night at Chogan Square in Shiraz. [43] The youngest was 17, most were in their 20s, and the oldest was 57. Arrested in October and November 1982, they were first held in an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) detention center and later transferred to Adel Abad Prison in Shiraz.

The women were subjected to harsh interrogations and torture in an effort to force them to renounce their faith. They were denied access to legal counsel and a public trial. They were sentenced to death by a judge on invented, alleged charges of "espionage" and "teaching moral education classes to children." Each was given four chances to recant her faith to avoid execution; none agreed. Forty years later, the #OurStoryIsOne campaign brought long-overdue attention to this atrocity. [44]

Members of the Baha'i faith



"Death to Baha'is" was written on the gate of a house belonging to a Baha'i family [45]

Baha'is, with an estimated population of 300,000 in Iran, are believed to be the second largest religious minority in the country after Sunni Muslims. [46]

Baha'i communities have been subjected to systematic, state-organized persecution since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

A confidential 1991 memorandum, approved by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, explicitly outlines a strategy to eliminate the Baha'i community as a viable entity through comprehensive discrimination. [47]

The document specifies they should not be expelled from the country or imprisoned "without reason," which is understood as a directive to formalize the persecution under existing laws to avoid international scrutiny, rather than offering protection.

Baha'is are expelled from universities upon identification and denied access to higher education in general, and as a rule. [48] They can only enroll in primary/secondary schools if they do not identify as Baha'is and are preferably placed in schools with "a strong and imposing religious ideology."

The government must "deny them employment if they identify themselves as Baha'is" and bar them from "any position of influence, such as in the educational sector." [49]

Baha'is are permitted only a "modest livelihood" that is generally available to the rest of the population, but measures are taken to deprive them of their sources of income. [50]

The regime uses the location of the Baha'i World Center in Haifa, Israel, as one of the main excuses for their persecution. Since the Islamic Republic was founded in 1979, it has accused Baha'is of being "officers of Zionism" due to the location of their holy sites in Israel. [51]

There is no evidence that the Baha'i Faith is tied to the Israeli government. The Baha'i administration is a global religious center independent of any state, and Israel merely hosts it because of historical exile. [52]

The following pages contain profiles on some of the Baha'i individuals targeted by the Islamic Republic following the outbreak of the 12-Day War in June.

IDENTIFIED VICTIMS OF PERSECUTION IN 2025

Enforced Disappearance



Iman Rahmatpanah

ایمان رحمت‌پناه

AGE
39

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 21, 2025

LOCATION
Shiraz, Fars Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights, Access to Information

Baha'i resident of Shiraz who, in front of his children, was taken from his home at 11 p.m. on June 21, 2025, by eight regime officers. [53] Ministry of Intelligence searched his home and confiscated mobile phones, a laptop, and Baha'i religious books. For weeks after the arrest, authorities withheld his location and provided no explanation or charges, constituting an enforced disappearance. It was later learned he was held at the Shiraz Intelligence Detention Center ("Plaque 100" run by the Ministry of Intelligence) before being transferred to Adolabad Prison. He was detained in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, with reports of lice infestations at the facility. Rahmatpanah has previously been arrested and prosecuted for his faith. He was eventually freed on bail on August 24. [54]



Navid Tashakkor

نوید تشکر

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 21, 2025

LOCATION
Baharestan, Isfahan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Torture, Right to Leagal Counsel

Baha'i resident of Baharestan, Isfahan Province was re-arrested on June 21, 2025 by Intelligence Ministry officers who raided his home with a judicial warrant, searched the premises, and confiscated family mobile phones and laptops. This occurred less than ten days after his first arrest on 15 June 2025, when he was summoned by phone to his workplace and briefly detained along with several colleagues. His mobile phone was confiscated during the first arrest. Since the second arrest, authorities have withheld information on his whereabouts, legal case, or access to an attorney, and have denied him family contact. His detention comes amid intensified security pressure on Baha'is in Baharestan, where several other homes have recently been raided. [55]



Keyhan Maqsoudi کیهان مقصودی

AGE
49

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 21, 2025

LOCATION
Urmia, West Azerbaijan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Torture, Right to Leagal Counsel

A Bahá'í citizen, photographer, and filmmaker, was arrested during the 12-Day War by security forces at his workplace in Urmia. Initially held in a Ministry of Intelligence detention center, he was later transferred to Urmia Prison, but has since been returned to an unidentified security facility. His family has received no official information regarding his case, charges, or whereabouts, and he has been denied access to an independent lawyer. His sister reported concerns that he may be subjected to torture and coerced confessions. [56]



Arman Nikaein آرمان نیک‌آیین

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 22, 2025

LOCATION
Shiraz, Fars Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights, Right to Leagal Counsel

Baha'i citizen, a composer and music teacher residing in Qeshm, was arrested on June 22, 2025, in Shiraz by 10 IRGC intelligence officers during a raid on the home of the Momtazian family, fellow Baha'is. officers searched the property, seized electronic devices from those present, and arrested Nikaein without presenting a warrant. His mother suffered a nervous breakdown during the raid and was hospitalized. Over six weeks later, he remains incommunicado, with no information on his location, charges, or legal status. Authorities have refused to set bail, extended his detention, and denied him family visits and access to a lawyer. [57]



Noyan Hejazi نویان حجازی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 24, 2025

LOCATION
Juybar, Mazandaran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights

A Baha'i resident of Juybar was arrested at his home on June 24, 2025, by 10 security officers who entered without a warrant, waking him and his wife in their bedroom. officers searched the property and confiscated personal belongings, including mobile phones, laptops, and Baha'i religious books belonging to him and his wife. He was transferred to Kachoui Detention Center in Sari and denied contact or visits with his family for at least ten days, citing official holidays as the reason. His wife, Lava Samimi, was later arrested when she went to the detention center to inquire about him. He was released on August 3, 2025, on bail. [58, 59]



Mahyar Meybodi مهیار میبدی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 28, 2025

LOCATION
Rafsanjan, Kerman Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights

Baha'i resident of Rafsanjan, was arrested at his home on June 28, 2025 by IRGC intelligence officers. Security forces searched the property and confiscated personal belongings, including laptops and mobile phones belonging to him and his family members. He was taken to an undisclosed location, and no information has been provided about the charges or his whereabouts. [60]



Sahba Mohammadi صهبا محمدی

AGE
25

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 28, 2025

LOCATION
Birjand, South Khorasan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights

Baha'i resident of Birjand, Sohba Mohammadi, was arrested at her home by Intelligence Ministry officers at around 7 a.m. on 28 June 2025. Security forces searched the premises and confiscated personal belongings, including her mobile phone, laptop, and Baha'i religious books. She was taken to an undisclosed location. Authorities have not provided information on the charges or her whereabouts. [61]



Raquel Ataeian راکوئل عطاییان

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 24, 2025

LOCATION
Qaemshahr, Mazandaran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance and Arbitrary Detention, Excessive Bail as Punishment

Baha'i resident of Qaemshahr, Raquel Ataian, was arrested at her home on June 29, 2025 by IRGC intelligence officers. Seven officers searched her residence and confiscated religious books, mobile phones, laptops, and other family belongings. She was taken to an undisclosed location and denied basic detainee rights. Her husband, Soheil Haqdoust, was arrested two days later. Ataian was released on July 22, 2025 on bail of 30 billion rials ($46,000 USD). She has faced prior security-related persecution for her faith. [62, 63]



Soheil Haghdoost سهیل حق‌دوست

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 1, 2025

LOCATION
Qaemshahr, Mazandaran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance and Arbitrary Detention, Excessive Bail as Punishment

Baha'i resident of Qaemshahr, was arrested at his home on July 1, 2025 by security forces, who searched the property and seized personal belongings. Just hours after his arrest, he experienced severe heart palpitations and was briefly taken to Fatemeh Zahra Hospital in Sari before being returned to detention. He suffers from diabetes and heart disease. Authorities did not disclose his location to his family for weeks. He was released on July 22, 2025 on bail of 30 billion rial ($46,000 USD). Haghdoost has a history of prior judicial persecution for his faith. [64]



Mehran Dastournejad
مهران دستورنژاد

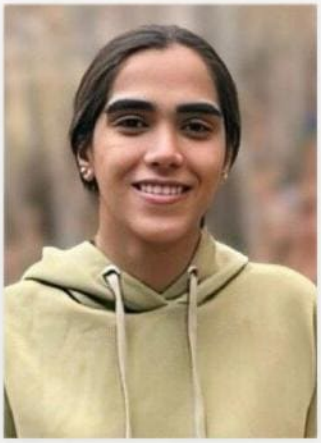
AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 5, 2025

LOCATION
Marvdasht, Fars Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Torture

Baha'i citizen Mehran Dastournejad was arrested violently on July 5, 2025. His daughter, Iranian-American actress and model Boshra Dastournejad, reported that he has never been involved in politics and has remained in Iran to care for his parents and practice his Baha'i faith. She stated that his only "crime" is his religious affiliation. She also noted that numerous other Baha'i friends and relatives were recently arrested without cause. The arrest occurred amid a wave of detentions of Baha'is accused without evidence of "collaboration or espionage for Israel" following the 12-Day War between Israel and the Islamic Republic. [65]



Armaghan Yazdani ارمغان یزدانی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 22, 2025

LOCATION
Shiraz, Fars Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights, Torture

IRGC Intelligence officers arrested Armaghan while she, her mother, and sister were running wedding-related errands. The officers forced them back to the family home, detained Yazdani, and searched the residence, seizing phones, a laptop, a tablet, IDs, photos, and Baha'i religious books and notes. Officials have not revealed her charges or whereabouts. Yazdani is engaged to Vahid Masoumi, whom security forces previously arrested and later freed on bail. [66] Her detention was extended for ten more days on August 25, 2025. [67]



Afshar Family خانواده افشار

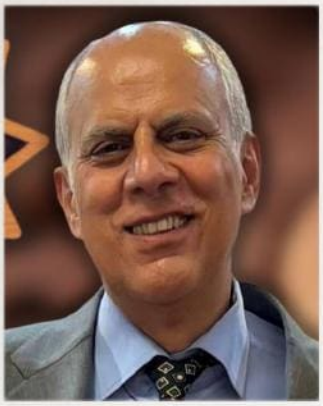
AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 29, 2025

LOCATION
Shahinshahr, Isfahan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Violation of Privacy and Property Rights, Torture

Arshad (ارشد), Bahareh (بهاره) & Arshia (ارشیا) Afshar, Baha'i family whose home was raided by security forces; officers seized their phones, laptop, books and notes, warning: "If you keep in touch with Nastaran, you'll face another security crackdown, we know about your recent trip to Turkey." The harassment was linked both to their faith and to continued contact with their daughter, Nastaran Afshar, who lives abroad. [68]



Shahram Fallah شهرام فلاح

AGE
64

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
August 18, 2025

LOCATION
Kerman Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Enforced Disappearance, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights

A 64-year-old Bahá'í resident of Kerman was arrested at his home by officers of the Ministry of Intelligence and transferred to their local detention center. During the raid, which occurred while several guests were present, officers confiscated the mobile phones of family members and guests, along with religious books and photographs belonging to Fallah. Since his arrest, he has been denied contact with his family, and no information has been released regarding the charges or reasons for his detention. Fallah has previously faced arrests, judicial harassment, and imprisonment on account of his Bahá'í faith. [69]



Nazanin Abedini نازنین عابدینی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 24, 2025

LOCATION
Qaemshahr, Mazandaran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Arbitrary Detention, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights

Baha'i resident of Qaemshahr, a children's music teacher, was arrested on June 24, 2025 when Intelligence Ministry officers forcibly entered her home by breaking the door. The officers, who did not present a warrant, seized her personal and electronic belongings. She was initially held in a security detention facility and then transferred to Sari Prison a week later, where she was kept in a ward with violent crime offenders in violation of the separation of prisoners rule. Authorities provided no legal justification for her arrest. She was released on August 2, 2025 on bail. [70, 71]



Lava Samimi

لوا صمیمی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 6, 2025

LOCATION
Juybar, Mazandaran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Arbitrary Arrest and Detention, Excessive Bail as Punishment

Baha'i resident of Juybar, Lava Samimi, was arrested while attempting to visit her detained husband, Noyan Hejazi, at Kachoui Detention Center. Security forces transferred her to another detention facility in Sari. She was held for over three weeks without information on her charges and deprived of basic detainee rights. On July 27, 2025, she was released on bail of 8 billion rials (approx. $16,000 USD). [72, 73]



Keyvan Dehghani and Lava Dehghani

کیوان دهقانی و لوا دهقانی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 7, 2025

LOCATION
Isfahan, Isfahan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Arbitrary Interrogation and, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights



Baha'i father and daughter, Keyvan Dehghani and Lava Dehghani, were summoned multiple times by the Isfahan Intelligence Department and interrogated. Keyvan was held for about nine hours, and Lava for about seven hours, during which she was pressured into signing pre-written documents. The summons was reportedly related to items confiscated from Keyvan during searches of his garden and home in December 2024 and February 2025. Both were released on the same day. Keyvan also faces an ongoing case at Branch 11 of the Isfahan Revolutionary Court and has been placed under a travel and trade ban by judicial order. He has a prior prison sentence for his faith-related activities. [74, 75]



Parya Marandiz پریا مرندیز

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
August 16, 2025

LOCATION
Tehran

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Torture, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights, Arbitrary Detention, and Interrogation

A Bahá'í theater and cinema actress was summoned to Branch the Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office. She defended herself against charges of "propaganda against the Islamic Republic," "promotion and support of the Zionist regime," and "insulting the sacred." She was temporarily released after posting bail of 35 billion rial (831,000 USD). Her interrogation followed four earlier summonses between June 16 and July 13, 2025. On June 16, during the 12-Day War, 12 security officers raided her home, confiscating religious items, books, laptops, and phones before blindfolding and interrogating her for six hours. She was later released at night on the street. Two days later, she was summoned again and interrogated for five hours in a Ministry of Intelligence safehouse. On July 1 and July 13, she endured two further eight-hour interrogation sessions. Marandiz remains at risk of prolonged prosecution, facing heavy charges directly linked to her Bahá'í faith and artistic activity. [76]

Lack of Due Process



Six Baha'i Residents of Karaj

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
May 9, 2025

LOCATION
Karaj, Alborz Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Violation of Freedom of Movement, Violation of Freedom of Expression

Baha'i citizens Naghmeh Mirza Agha (نغمه میرزاآقا), Mahin Sa'adatmand (ماهین سعادت‌مند), Mahshid Sefidi (مهشید سفیدی), Samar Masoudi (ثمر مسعودی), Mona Zakaei (مونا زکایی), and Naser Rajab (ناصر رجب) were each sentenced by Branch Two of the Alborz Revolutionary Court to 10 months in prison and a two-year travel ban on May 9, 2025. The charge against all six was "propaganda against the regime." Their trials were held on 9 May 9, 2025 and March 5, 2025. All were initially summoned to the prosecutor's office on 6 July 2024, interrogated, and released on bail. Naser Rajab has a prior record of security-related arrests. [77]





Nematollah Shadpour, Nima Shadpour, and Shafiq Eslami

نعمت‌الله شادپور، نیما شادپور و شفیق اسلامی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
March 5, 2025

LOCATION
Yazd, Yazd Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Violation of Freedom of Expression, Lack of Due Process

Baha'i citizens Nematollah Shadpour, Nima Shadpour, and Shafiq Eslami had their prison sentences, totaling 51 years, upheld by the Yazd Court of Appeals on March 5, 2025. In the initial verdict, Shafiq Eslami was sentenced to 17 years by the Criminal Court and 2 years and 7 months by the Revolutionary Court; Nima Shadpour to 15 years by the Criminal Court and 2 years and 7 months by the Revolutionary Court; and Nematollah Shadpour to 10 years by the Criminal Court and 3 years and 10 months by the Revolutionary Court. The charges included "membership in groups opposed to the regime," "propaganda against the Islamic Republic," "insulting the Supreme Leader," "insulting Islamic sanctities," and "collecting classified information to disrupt national security." All three were previously arrested on 19 July 2022 and released on bail. [78]



Peyman Norasteh پیمان نورسته

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 17, 2025

LOCATION
Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Torture, Lack of Due Process

Baha'i resident of Tabriz who was initially sentenced by the Tabriz Revolutionary Court to 15 months in prison, later reduced to 10 months on appeal. The appellate court suspended 9 months of the sentence, requiring him to serve 1 month in prison. On July 16, 2025, he reported to Tabriz Prison to begin serving this term. His conviction in the Tabriz Prosecutor's Office and later in the appeals court occurred without sufficient evidence or proper defense rights. [79]



Hamid Monzavi حمید منزوی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 21, 2025

LOCATION
Isfahan, Isfahan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Violation of the Right to Work, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights

Intelligence officers charged this Baha'i citizen with "propaganda against the regime" and "membership in a group formed to disrupt national security," sealed his two businesses in Isfahan for a month, and seized personal and work equipment. Authorities then transferred him to Isfahan Prison on July 21, 2025 to begin serving his sentence. [80]



Arshia Rouhani ارشیا روحانی

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 21, 2025

LOCATION
Isfahan, Isfahan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Violation of the Right to Work, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights

Intelligence officers charged this Baha'i citizen with "propaganda against the regime" and "membership in a group formed to disrupt national security," sealed his two businesses in Isfahan for a month, and seized personal and work equipment. Authorities then transferred him to Isfahan Prison on July 21, 2025 to begin serving his sentence. [81]



Arash Nabavi

آرش نبوی

AGE
39

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 21, 2025

LOCATION
Isfahan, Isfahan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Violation of the Right to Work, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights, Violation of Freedom of Expression and Movement

A Revolutionary Court sentenced Arash to five years in prison and fine for "membership in groups aimed at disrupting national security," plus another five years for "propaganda against the regime." Judges also imposed a two-year ban on internet activity and foreign travel and ordered the seizure of three mobile phones, three flash drives, two tablets, three SIM cards, and several Baha'i religious books and writings. Officials transferred Nabavi to Isfahan Prison on July 21, 2025 to begin serving the sentence. [82, 83]



Ardeshir Fanaeiyan

اردشیر فناییان

AGE
37

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
August 3, 2025

LOCATION
Semnan, Semnan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Violation of Freedom of Movement, Violation of Freedom of Expression, Torture, Lack of Due Process

Baha'i believer who finished a six-year prison term on March 19, 2025. Just three weeks later (14 Apr 2025) he was ordered to report for one-year exile in Khash, Sistan-Baluchestan, within five days. When he asked for time to secure basic housing for his two-year-old child, deputy prosecutor rebuffed him, saying "We should have sent you away long ago". On Aug 3, 2025 he, his wife and toddler were finally banished to Khash to begin the exile. [84, 85]



Six Baha'i Women

AGE
N/A

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
August 12, 2025

LOCATION
Hamedan Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Lack of Due Process, Torture, Violation of Privacy and Property Rights

Six Baha'i women from Hamedan, Neda Mohibi (ندا محبی), Atefeh Zahedi (عاطفه زاهدی), Farideh Ayoubi (فریده ایوبی), Noura Ayoubi (نورا ایوبی), Zarrindokht Ahadzadeh (زرین‌دخت احدزاده), and Zhaleh Rezaei (ژاله رضایی), had their prison sentences totaling 38 years and 11 months upheld in full by Branch 11 of the Hamedan Court of Appeals. The ruling was issued without a hearing session or notice to their lawyers, and was presided over by judges Bahram Karari and Morteza Ramazani. [86]

Their charges included membership in the Baha'i community and teaching and proselytizing against Sharia law.

Neda Mohibi was sentenced to 5 years for teaching/promoting Baha'i beliefs and 2 years, 8 months for Baha'i community membership. Three years of her sentence were suspended for five years.

Atefeh Zahedi, Farideh Ayoubi, Noura Ayoubi, Zarrindokht Ahadzadeh, and Zhaleh Rezaei each received 2 years, 8 months for membership and 3 years, 7 months for teaching/promoting Baha'i beliefs. For Noura Ayoubi, Ahadzadeh, and Rezaei, two years of their sentences were suspended for five years.

The six women were originally arrested on November 6, 2023 (16 Aban 1402) by security forces and taken to the Intelligence Department's detention center in Hamedan. They were released on bail the following month pending trial. Security forces also searched the homes of Zhaleh Rezaei and Farideh Ayoubi, confiscating personal belongings.

Torture



Golriz Noorani گلریز نورانی

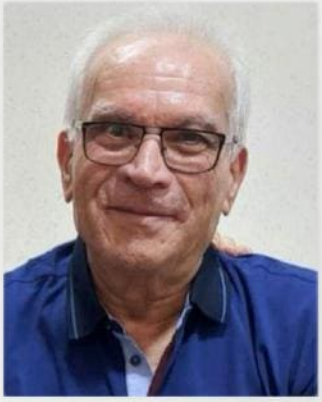
AGE
39

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
June 21, 2025

LOCATION
Qazvin, Qazvin Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Violation of Privacy and Property Rights, Violation of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, Torture

Baha'i resident of Qazvin, a computer specialist, her home was raided by security forces on June 21, 2025. Security forces confiscated electronic devices, including her mobile phone, and Baha'i religious books. Noorani has previously faced similar targeting. [87]



Noorollah Ataeian نورالله عطاییان

AGE
70

DATE OF LATEST PERSECUTION
July 21, 2025

LOCATION
Qaemshahr, Mazandaran Province

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATED
Violation of Privacy and Property Rights, Torture

Security forces burst into Noorollah's home, hurled insults, used force, and confiscated mobile phones, a tablet, and Baha'i scriptures. They then stormed the homes of his two sons. On the day of the raid, Ataeian's daughter Raquel and her husband Soheil Haghdoost had remained in custody for 23 days. [88]

Further Persecutions

In Isfahan, the authorities have ordered the confiscation of the property of 22 Baha'i citizens under Article 49 of the Islamic Republic Constitution, bypassing due process and even deleting case files from the judiciary's online system.

According to HRANA, these individuals have been effectively stripped of the right to transfer or use their assets, while facing parallel cases, one for imprisonment and another for property seizure.

Lawyers have been denied access, and many victims remain unnamed for security reasons.

Rights groups warn this marks an escalation of systematic economic persecution against Baha'is, a pattern already seen in provinces like Mazandaran and Khorasan Razavi, and often carried out by the "Executive Headquarters of Imam's Directive." [89]

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