

WOMAN LIFE FREEDOM

Victims' Fight for
Accountability Amid
Repression

Abdorrahman
Boroumand Center

For Human
Rights
In Iran



Woman, Life, Freedom: Victims' Fight for Accountability Amid Repression

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Executive Summary

“Where in the law does it say that the mother of a victim should be imprisoned for seeking justice for her child while the murderer walks freely in the streets? It seems that the roles of plaintiff and defendant are reversed. My mother is a grieving person seeking justice. My mother does not deserve prison.”

Since 2017, the Islamic Republic of Iran has faced repeated waves of protests, each met with brutal repression and systemic impunity. The November 2019 fuel price protests, the deadliest in decades, were met with lethal force, with authorities consistently obscuring the truth, blaming “rioters” and “external enemies,” and intimidating victims’ families into silence. However, the 2022 “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests, sparked by Mahsa Jina Amini’s death in Morality Police custody, marked a turning point. This unprecedented uprising, involving women and children and spreading nationwide, sparked global solidarity and new efforts to hold Iran’s leaders accountable.

The government’s response to the 2022 protests was characterized by extreme brutality. Thousands were unlawfully killed, blinded, or injured, with Kurdish and Baluch minorities disproportionately targeted. Tens of thousands, including children, lawyers, and journalists, were detained and subjected to torture, rape, humiliation, and imprisonment. At least seven were executed.



A girl among the protesters dances beside a fire and throws her headscarf into the flames amidst them. Sari, September 22, 2022. Video is uploaded by VOA

This violence, widely disseminated through videos online, fueled international outrage, culminating in the creation of the United Nations Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFMI). Tasked with investigating Mahsa Amini’s death and the state’s violent crackdown, the FFMI aimed to uncover the truth about the systemic impunity and lack of justice for victims.

Iranian authorities, facing global scrutiny, conducted their own investigations, which failed to meet international standards. Official narratives frequently deflected blame onto “terrorists” or “rioters,” while evidence pointing to state violence was systematically suppressed. For example, President Raisi’s Special Committee exonerated the Morality Police and security forces in Amini’s death, denying access to crucial evidence and downplaying security forces’ involvement in killings.

In contrast, the FFMI’s March 2024 findings highlighted state-sponsored violence, including unlawful

killings, systemic torture, and sexual violence – acts amounting to “crimes against humanity.” It revealed that Iranian investigations were neither impartial nor thorough, offering no transparency or accountability to victims’ families.

Among the 16 cases investigated by Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran, only two resulted in prosecution of state agents and their conviction. Even those lacked transparency and independent scrutiny. Families pursuing justice faced threats, harassment, and legal persecution, while their lawyers risked imprisonment or professional bans. The judiciary often failed to hold perpetrators accountable, offering financial compensation to silence families instead.

Two years after the “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests, justice remains a distant goal. Survivors and victims’ families have lost faith in the judiciary, which they view as both ineffective and dangerous. Iran’s deeply flawed legal framework perpetuates impunity, leaving protests as the only avenue for change despite the inevitable risk of more bloodshed.

The FFMI’s work highlights the urgent need for international vigilance and pressure on Iran. Its recommendations include applying universal jurisdiction for crimes against humanity, prioritizing asylum for victims, and funding psychological support programs. It also emphasizes the need for structural reforms in Iran’s judiciary to ensure accountability and uphold human rights.

The international community must sustain pressure on Iran, demanding justice, structural reforms, and political participation. Partnering with the FFMI is crucial to achieving justice and reparations for victims outside Iran. To break the cycle of violence, the world must unequivocally signal that impunity for repressing protesters will no longer be tolerated.

Methodology

From the fall of 2022 to November 2024, ABC’s researchers carried out over 300 interviews with informed sources inside and outside of Iran, via phone, various messaging applications, and in person, regarding the state’s response to the fall 2022 protests. Some were interviewed multiple times for updates, concerning seven criminal complaints filed by victims’ families in this report. ABC has reviewed reports from the media inside and outside of Iran, court and other official documents when available, human rights reports and carried out an open source investigation. Researchers have informed interviewees of the purpose of the interview, its voluntary nature, and the ways in which the data would be used, and obtained their verbal consent. Interviewees received no compensation for these interviews. Considering the risks involved in providing information about the victims’ cases and the security concerns of some interviewees, individual cases are presented in this report in the form of case summaries without identifying the interviewees or quoting them.

I - Introduction

Since 2017, Iran has faced repeated waves of protests, all met with unlawful lethal force and impunity. The crackdown on the November 2019 fuel price protests, the deadliest in decades, was shrouded in secrecy and received little international attention. Five years on, its death toll remains unknown and the crisis of impunity persists.¹ Brutal unlawful repression continues to take a toll, killing, blinding, and injuring thousands who take to the streets, their only outlet for expressing grievances. Authorities deflect blame onto “rioters” and “external enemies,”² intimidating and silencing those who speak-up. The 2022 Woman, Life, Freedom protest followed the same brutal pattern but sparked global solidarity and unprecedented efforts to hold Iran’s leaders accountable.

Between September and December 2022, Iran experienced another wave of nationwide protests – larger in scope, duration, diversity, spanning over 160 cities, universities, and schools. This unprecedented uprising, known as the Woman, Life, Freedom protest, was sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Jina Amini, a young Kurdish woman Tehran’s Morality Police arrested September 13 for wearing her veil “improperly.” What began as a protest of women and girls burning their headscarves evolved rapidly into a broader movement against the theocratic regime, enraging the Islamic Republic’s leaders.

The state responded with unlawful lethal force, killing, injuring, and blinding thousands, including a disproportionately high number of Kurdish and Baluch citizens. Tens of thousands of protesters, including children, lawyers, journalists, and celebrities were arrested across the country. Authorities have humiliated, beaten, tortured, and raped protesters.³ Scores of lawyers who took protesters’ cases were also detained, imprisoned, and punished in various ways.⁴ At least seven protesters have been



“Fortunately, people outside the country do not have access to the information and statistics. For this reason, they provide various figures, none of which are reliable.”

The Attorney General, Mohammad Jafar Montazeri, on the number of those killed or arrested during the November 2019 protests: Shahrara News Agency, November 30, 2019.

1 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, January 13, 2022. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g22/005/44/pdf/g2200544.pdf>

2 IRNA News Agency, June 19, 2023. <https://www.irna.ir/news/85145444/>

3 “Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, United Nations, March 19, 2024. <https://www.iranrights.org/library/document/4144>.

4 “Iran Must be Held to Account for Lawyers’ Fundamental Rights,” Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran, February 27, 2023. <https://www.iranrights.org/newsletter/issue/130>.

executed so far⁵ and the number of executions has spiked to 1714 between October 1, 2022 and November 21, 2024, according to the research of Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran (ABC).

The brutality of the violence, captured in images and videos, fueled both domestic and international outrage. For the first time, public pressure outside Iran led to steps toward holding Iranian authorities accountable. The Islamic Republic was expelled from the Commission on the Status of Women,⁶ and on November 24, 2022, a United Nations Independent Fact Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFMI) was created to investigate the death of Mahsa Amini and the events that followed.

In the aftermath of the protests, the authorities intimidated and punished citizens, including victims' families (victims) and injured protesters, to silence them and ensure immunity for those who ordered or carried out the crackdown, as they had done in the past. However, the persistent negative international attention also prompted Iran to remove the Morality Police from the streets for months and take steps such as creating fact-finding bodies to investigate the death of Amini and the protests. At the same time, and unlike 2017 or 2019, court cases were opened for a number of victims' families who were brave enough to file complaints and seek justice for the killing of their loved ones.

ABC was able to investigate 16 criminal complaints cases and their outcomes, two years after the protest. Its findings show that, for the most part, the State has not cooperated in identifying agents or the forces present at the time and place where protesters were killed, has obstructed the investigations and/or tried to bribe or intimidate families into withdrawing their complaints. Families continue to face significant challenges in their pursuit of accountability for their lost loved ones through a justice system that lacks independence and transparency.

5 "After a Bloody May, the World Must Challenge Iran's Escalating War on Dissent," Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran, June 22, 2023. <https://www.iranrights.org/library/document/4051>.; See also the cases of Mohsen Shekari (<https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8734/mohsen-shekari>) and Mohammad Mehdi Karami (<https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8588/mohammad-mehdi-karami>).

6 "Iran removed from UN Commission on the Status of Women," UN News, December 14, 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131722>.

II - Official Investigations

Following the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and the ensuing public outrage, on September 18, 2022, the Iranian Parliament's Internal Affairs Committee established a special task force to investigate her death. In addition, in response to the violent crackdown in Iran, on November 24, 2022, the United Nations Human Rights Council voted overwhelmingly to establish an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the events leading to Mahsa Jina Amini's death and the subsequent crackdown on protests.

A few months later, on May 7, 2023, then-President Ebrahim Raisi ordered the formation of a "Special Committee to Investigate the Unrest of 2022" (The Special Committee). The Special Committee was chaired by Hossein Mozaffar, a member of the Expediency Discernment Council. Other key members included Kazem Gharibabadi, Secretary of the Islamic Human Rights Headquarters; Sakineh Sadat Pad, Assistant to the President and Supervisor of Social Rights and Freedoms; Zohreh Elahian, Head of the Parliament's Human Rights Committee – who had previously entered the parliament with the Guardian Council's approval and had described the protests as part of a "grand plan to overthrow the holy Islamic Republic regime"⁷; and Hassan Safadust, Head of the Central Bar Association.⁸

Raisi tasked the Special Committee with investigating the events of 2022 to support potential legal action in international forums and to provide human rights organizations with accurate, well-documented evidence. The Special Committee was also instructed to make recommendations to address any legal gaps or enhance regulations concerning the right to peaceful assembly. Additionally, it was to deliver an impartial, fact-based report on the events of the 2022 protests, drawing on evidence, testimonies, and reliable data. The committee's goal was to prevent similar incidents in the future by leveraging the insights of scholars, intellectuals, and national elites. Raisi requested regular reports from the committee on its progress and findings.



President Raisi meeting with the special committee, August 14, 2023. President Portal



From top left: Hossein Mozaffar, Zohreh Elahian, Sakineh Sadat Pad, Kazem Gharibabadi

⁷ Zohreh Elahian's interview, Fars News Agency, December 5, 2022. <https://farsnews.ir/politics/1670226157000041450/>

⁸ Iran Presidential Office News Portal, May 7, 2023. <https://president.ir/fa/143833>

The Committee formed by the Internal Affairs Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly to investigate the death of Mahsa Amini presented its findings to the parliament on October 16, 2022. According to the committee's investigation, "no physical assault or injury" occurred during Amini's arrest, transfer, or time in the custody of the Morality Police. The Committee also called for legal action against those who hastily made statements that could be used by the "enemies and the rioters" before the investigation was completed.⁹ In addition, the Iranian Forensic Medicine Organization released a statement attributing Amini's death to complications from an operation she underwent at the age of eight.¹⁰

Raisi's Special Committee also presented its findings in a 279-page report to the President on March 5, 2024. Although the full report was not made public, a summary of the investigation was released in a statement on the same day. In this statement, the Special Committee confirmed the findings of the Iranian Forensic Medicine Organization and reiterated that Amini's death "was not caused by a beating to the head or any vital organs."

The Special Committee reported that 202 people were killed during the "riots," but it did not hold security forces or other state agents responsible for any of these deaths. It categorizes the fatalities as follows:

- **90 individuals** were killed while carrying or using weapons (cold or firearms) in acts of terrorism, clashes, and attacks on military or law enforcement facilities, critical infrastructure, or law enforcement personnel.
- **112 individuals** were bystanders who lost their lives during the unrest, either due to weapons not used by law enforcement agencies or through deliberate, calculated [and deliberate] killings by armed terrorists aimed at creating a negative atmosphere against the regime.

During the unrest, **79 law enforcement personnel and [ordinary] people** were killed by violent actors or in terrorist operations, detailed as follows:

- **25 fatalities** occurred in terrorist incidents in Shiraz (13 individuals), Izeh (7 individuals), and among other civilian victims (5 individuals), resulting from terrorist attacks or violence by rioters.
- **54 law enforcement personnel** were killed due to widespread violence by rioters and terrorists.

The Committee also stressed that the Islamic Republic had taken extensive measures to take responsibility and compensate victims for damages during the 2022 unrest. Among these measures, it highlighted the prompt investigation of Amini's death to "clarify all aspects of the incident and uncover the truth."¹¹

The FFMI, consisting of three experienced legal experts and a team of specialists (including experts in women's rights, children's rights, etc.), investigators, and translators, presented its first official report at the UN headquarters in Geneva on February 2, 2024. The findings of this report strongly contradict the

⁹ Tasnim News Agency, October 16, 2022. <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1401/07/24/2788715/>

¹⁰ IRNA News Agency, October 7, 2022. <https://www.irna.ir/news/84905819/>

¹¹ Iran Government Information Center, March 16, 2024. <https://dolat.ir/detail/442106>

Iranian government's investigation into both the circumstances of Mahsa Amini's death and the violent repression of the "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests. According to the report, between the beginning of the protests and August 2023, protests took place in 26 provinces across Iran, resulting in the deaths of at least 551 people, including 68 children. September 28, 2022, was recorded as the deadliest day of the protests, when security forces opened fire on demonstrators in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, killing at least 104 people.¹²

In the case of Mahsa Amini, the FFMI established "the existence of evidence of trauma to Amini's body, inflicted while in the custody of the 'morality police,'" and concluded that this physical violence led to her death. The FFMI stated:

"Based on the evidence, and patterns of violence by the 'morality police' in enforcing this law against women, the Mission is satisfied that Amini was subjected to physical violence that led to her death. On that basis, the State bears responsibility for her unlawful death."



The FFMI identified security forces' use of firearms, including assault rifles and pellet guns, as the cause of death for the majority of protesters killed. In addition, numerous other repressive actions by the Iranian government, such as patterns of eye injuries to protesters and bystanders, sexual and gender-based violence in detention centers, forced confessions, intimidation, humiliation, coercion, and more, were labeled "crimes against humanity."¹³

The Iranian government not only refused to cooperate with the FFMI but also denied it access to the country to conduct on-site investigations. In response to the FFMI's report, the government dismissed its credibility with vague generalizations and rejected its findings.

On March 12, 2024, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry rejected the FFMI's report. "In light of the foregoing, the report of the so-called fact-finding mission lacks legal validity and standing and is therefore deemed invalid and rejected by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Formed by select Western countries and funded by their money, this so-called mission has resorted to disseminating an orchestrated series of distortions and falsehoods. Not only has it been unable to divulge the truth,

12 Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, February 2, 2024. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/008/67/pdf/g2400867.pdf>

13 Ibid. <https://www.iranrights.org/fa/library/document/4144>

but it has deliberately inverted the very facts.”¹⁴ In addition, the International Affairs Office and the Human Rights Headquarters of the Iranian Judiciary issued a statement titled “Substantive Errors and Contradictions” in which they criticized the report for not using “first-hand, reliable and verifiable sources.” They also accused the report of failing to uphold the principle of “ensuring access to the truth through objective and reliable information from credible sources.”¹⁵

In her report to the 55th session of the Human Rights Council on March 18, 2024, Sara Hossain, the Chair of the Fact-Finding Mission, provided details of the evidence and documents collected. Hossain stated:



Dr. Kazem Gharibabadi, Vice-President of the Judiciary for International Affairs and the Secretary-General of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran before the United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva, 18 March 2024. *Geneva MFA Portal*

“From the outset, we sought in good faith to engage with the Government of Iran. Regrettably, however, the Government did not cooperate, neither granting access to the country, nor responding to 21 detailed letters of inquiry sent by the Mission until January 2024. At the same time, the Government of Iran’s continued and extensive restrictions on online communications, including surveillance, harassment and intimidation of victims and their families, inhibited people from coming forward. The Mission itself had to take an approach of extreme caution, following the ‘do no harm principle,’ given the very real risk of potential reprisals against those who speak out in Iran.”¹⁶

Hossain further stated:

“Despite these challenges, the Mission was ultimately able to collect and preserve over 27,000 evidence items and conduct a total of 133 in-depth interviews with victims and witnesses, including 48 women, 85 men, both inside and outside the country. It also benefited from evidence and analysis from experts on digital and medical forensics and domestic and international law. It also meticulously examined the Government of Iran’s official documents, including public statements of officials, alongside 41 reports of Iran’s High Council for Human Rights (received by other UN bodies), and also held exchanges with Iran’s ‘Special Committee to investigate the 2022 Unrests.’ The Mission’s findings thus stand on methodologically sound foundation, supporting the conclusions in our report and the conference room paper issued today.”

14 “Response of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Fact-Finding Committee Report,” March 12, 2024. <https://geneva.mfa.ir/portal/news-view/741677/The-Statement-by-HE-Dr-Kazem-Gharibabadi-Before-the-United-Nations-Human-Rights-Council>

15 ISNA, “The Islamic Republic of Iran’s Response to the Report of the ‘Fact-Finding Mission,’” March 12, 2024, <https://www.isna.ir/news/140212221568>

16 Statement by Sara Hossain, Chairperson of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, March 21, 2024. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/03/statement-sara-hossain-chairperson-independent-international-fact>

In her concluding remarks, Hossain underscored the necessity of holding perpetrators of human rights violations accountable in order to interrupt the cycle of impunity. She also urged the Iranian government to halt the execution of protestors, promptly release detained protestors, cease the judicial harassment of victims and their families, and guarantee their access to reparation, truth, justice, and compensation. Iran did not address many of the FFMI's concerns. However, some families of killed protestors were able to file complaints, but this did not necessarily lead to investigations and accountability for perpetrators.

III - Cases of Criminal Complaints

The atmosphere of repression and harassment faced by families and victims has significantly undermined the resolve of those seeking justice for loved ones killed in the protests. This environment has fostered a general mistrust in the independence of the judiciary, thereby rendering legal justice an unattainable goal. Consequently, a considerable number of families of the victims have chosen to refrain from filing official complaints. Nevertheless, a small number of families have chosen to pursue judicial justice, despite the considerable difficulties and challenges involved.

In the course of its investigation of 16 cases, ABC obtained access to official documents revealing that 4 judges in various cities throughout Iran had explicitly acknowledged in their rulings that certain victims had been killed by "military forces." In at least two instances, two official military personnel were convicted of premeditated murder and sentenced to "qesas," [Retribution]. These cases collectively cast doubt on the findings of the Raisi government's Special Committee, which concluded that the state's armed forces had not killed any protester. .

The following sections will examine these cases in three categories: "Cases where armed government officials were convicted of murdering protestors," "Unresolved cases," and "Cases where the perpetrator was identified as a government agent but not named."

Part 1: Cases of Armed Officers Convicted of Murder

In only two instances did the pursuit of justice by bereaved families, and undeniable evidence, result in the conviction of members of the government's armed forces.

1. Mehran Samak



Mehran Samak was 27 years old when he was fatally shot with a pellet gun by security forces in Bandar Anzali on November 29, 2022. His family's legal pursuit represents a rare instance in which a member of the armed forces was arrested and convicted.

On the day of Mehran Samak's death, numerous citizens had taken to the streets across Iran in response to the national football team's defeat at the hands of the United States in the World Cup. Many citizens were unhappy with the national football team because of its lack of solidarity for the countrywide protests, along with the players' meeting with then-president Ebrahim Raisi. As a result, they celebrated the team's loss to the U.S. as a symbolic expression of opposition to the government. Samak was among the demonstrators. While driving with his fiancée in Bandar Anzali, his honking was perceived by security forces as an act of celebration, resulting in them shooting him directly with a pellet gun, which ultimately led to his death.

On February 15, 2023, the Shargh newspaper reported that Samak's father filed a complaint in Gilan's Revolutionary Court regarding his son's death. Following a judicial investigation, Seyed Jafar Javanmardi, the Bandar Anzali police chief, was dismissed from his position and arrested on charges of "failing to follow regulations on the use of weapons, resulting in intentional homicide."

Seyed Majid Ahmadi, the lawyer in the case, told Shargh Newspaper that on January 14, 2024, the Gilan Military Court sentenced Javanmardi to "Qesas" [execution] for "premeditated murder."¹⁷ Javanmardi appealed the decision, and Branch 21 of the Supreme Court overturned the sentence and sent the case to an equivalent court in the Qazvin Military Court for retrial. On January 23, 2024, in response to the

¹⁷ Shargh Newspaper, February 15, 2023. <https://www.sharghdaily.com/>

Supreme Court's reversal, Mehran's father, Hamid Samak, posted a photo of his son's face covered in blood on Instagram, writing, "How can you overturn the sentence? The Supreme Court wants to overturn the verdict under pressure from officials, but I won't let your blood go to waste."¹⁸ On March 27, 2024, Shargh Newspaper reported that the Qazvin Court had upheld the original ruling of the Gilan Military Court and again sentenced Javanmardi to Qesas.¹⁹ However, Mas'ud Setayeshi, the spokesman for the judiciary at the time, asserted on April 9, 2024, that the sentence was not final, stating, "If the defendant appeals, the case will be sent to the Supreme Court for review." He also emphasized that "the judiciary is focused on promoting peace and reconciliation."²⁰ In response to Javanmardi's death sentence, the Revolutionary Guard-affiliated Fars News Agency called the sentence "harsh" and argued that it would "undermine the police."²¹

Mehran Samak's case is still pending.

2. Mohammad Jameh Bozorg



Mohammad Jameh Bozorg was 59 years old when he was killed on September 24, 2022 by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) shotgun from a distance of one meter, while he was on the roof of his house. In a court case "an official member of the IRGC" was sentenced to "qesas" [retribution] for the premeditated murder of Jameh Bozorg. The family stated: "Our demand is justice, not revenge."

At 3:00 a.m. on September 24, security forces raided the home of Mohammad Jameh Bozorg without a legal warrant. When Jameh Bozorg refused to surrender without seeing the warrant, the security forces shot him with a pellet gun at close range – just one meter away.

On April 26, 2023, Shargh Newspaper reported that the family of Mohammad Jameh Bozorg had filed a complaint with the Malard Court regarding the murder of their father. According to Payam Derafshan, the family's lawyer, the Malard prosecutor transferred the case to the Tehran Military Court for further investigation.

Rafi'i, the investigator from Branch one of the Military Prosecutor's Office in West Tehran, was able to

18 BBC Persian, January 23, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/bbcpersian/p/C2ch45NIZpC/?img_index=1

19 Shargh Newspaper, March 27, 2024. <https://www.sharghdaily.com/>

20 Shargh Newspaper, April 9, 2023. <https://www.sharghdaily.com/>

21 Shargh Newspaper, April 1, 2023. <https://www.sharghdaily.com/>

identify and arrest the perpetrator. The identity of the assailant remains unknown, and he is referred to in the case files as “the leader of the first team.” However, reports indicate that the shooter is an official employee of the IRGC. Notably, the assailant has a criminal record: one of the ongoing cases against him in the First Branch of the Malard Public and Revolutionary Court involves charges of “shooting, cattle theft, and possession of weapons.” He had previously been convicted in another case for “carrying and possessing a Winchester hunting rifle without a permit.”

During interrogation, the assailant claimed that the gun had been discharged accidentally from a distance. However, forensic analysis of the weapon and the crime scene confirmed that the bullet was fired directly at Jameh Bozorg from a distance of one meter, indicating that the weapon was used “with intent to kill.” According to Vahid Jameh Bozorg, the victim’s brother, “The killers couldn’t deny their involvement because there were witnesses.”²²

In the final decision of the Public Prosecutor’s Office, 12 of the 14 suspects involved in the case – who, according to the Public Prosecutor’s Office, “participated in the forcible entry into the victim’s house” – were arrested and charged. The other two members of the security team remain “at large” and are being pursued. Derafshan mentioned that the final verdict also addressed attempts to obstruct the case, false reports by the officers, efforts to prevent the burial of Mohammad Jameh Bozorg in Malard, and the submission of false reports by the security forces to the District Security Council.²³

On January 13, 2024, the Fifth Branch of the Tehran Military Tribunal sentenced the main defendant to death. Three of the officers were sentenced to imprisonment, with emphasis on their inability to receive reductions in the sentence or pay fines, while seven other imprisoned officers were acquitted based on the verdict issued.²⁴ On September 1, 2024, the 26th Branch of the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the military tribunal.

In the verdict issued by the 29th Branch of the Supreme Court, the main defendant – previously described by domestic news outlets as an “official of a military organization” but identified in court documents as a “Basij” member – was sentenced to “qesas” [retribution] for the murder of Jameh Bozorg. Other defendants in the case, identified as “Pasdar” (members of the IRGC), received short prison sentences.²⁵ Derafshan stated that the family of Jameh Bozorg’s primary demand is for justice. They emphasized that they are not seeking revenge, but aim to prevent similar incidents from happening again and affirm that no one’s life is more valuable than another’s.²⁶

22 BBC Farsi, 7 may 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/czqngdqglgno>

23 Shargh Newspaper, April 26, 2023. <https://ensafnews.com/413152/>

24 Ham-Mihan Newspaper, January 13, 2024. <https://hammihanonline.ir/fa/tiny/news-11773>

25 Madara News Website, August 31, 2024. <https://www.modara.ir/fa/news/312205/>

26 Ham-Mihan Newspaper, January 13, 2024. <https://hammihanonline.ir/fa/tiny/news-11773>

Part 2: Unresolved Cases

Unresolved cases are those that have been pending for two years without effective judicial processing. In addition, the authorities have subjected families to various forms of harassment and legal persecution in order to discourage them from seeking justice.

1. Mahsa Jina Amini



The Morality Police (Gasht Ershad) arrested Mahsa Jina Amini in Tehran on September 13, 2022, because, they claimed, of her “inappropriate” veil. After being taken to a detention center, she fell into a coma and was transferred by security forces to Kasra Hospital, where she died three days later. Two years later, her family’s complaint remains unresolved and suspended. The lawyer handling the case has also been sentenced to prison.²⁷

After their daughter’s death, the Amini family requested that the Tehran Criminal Court establish an independent Fact-Finding Mission, composed of non-government doctors approved by the family, to investigate the cause of her death. Shahriari, then-Deputy Prosecutor and Head of the Tehran Criminal Court, initially agreed to this request.²⁸ However, on October 1, 2022, the meeting to investigate the cause of Mahsa Jina Amini’s death was held without the presence of the family and included several members of the Legal Medicine Organization, despite the family’s request to be involved and to have family-approved independent doctors.

After this meeting, the judicial authorities informed the Amini family that some forensic doctors believed that the cause of Mahsa Jina Amini’s death was not due to blunt force trauma, and instead attributed her death to “poor performance” and the “low quality of the thyroid medication” she had been taking. The Amini family rejected this theory and insisted on the formation of an independent Fact-Finding Mission composed of independent doctors, citing preliminary evidence of blood traces found in Mahsa’s ear at the hospital.²⁹

On October 7, 2022, the Forensic Medicine Organization issued a statement saying that based on the examination of the body, autopsy and pathological tests, they had rejected blunt force trauma and vital

27 ““We’ll show you, you hijab-removing girl”: One Witness Account of the Vozara Detention Center,” Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran, September 16, 2023. <https://www.iranrights.org/newsletter/issue/134>

28 ISNA News Agency, September 28, 2022. isna.ir/xdMvDB

29 Khabar Online, October 1, 2022. khabaronline.ir/xjhrB

organ injury as the cause of death. Instead, they attributed her death to an operation she underwent at the age of eight.³⁰

The Amini family rejected the Legal Medicine Organization's claims, saying their daughter had been treated between the ages of six and seven for a visible tumor above her eye. Dr. Mas'ud Shirvani, the specialist who oversaw Mahsa Jina Amini's surgery, explicitly stated at the Forensic Medicine Organization meeting that "the old surgery had no role in her death."



Mahsa Amini in the Training Hall of the Tehran Morality Police on September 13, 2022. *Etemad Online*, September 20, 2022

After the Amini family protested the forensic report, their objections were rejected and Mahsa Jina Amini's case was dismissed before it reached court.

Saleh Nikbakht, the lawyer representing Amini's case, was summoned several times by the security services and warned not to speak to "foreign media." On October 7, 2023, the 28th Branch of the Tehran Revolutionary Court charged Nikbakht with "propaganda against the regime" for using the term "murder" in an interview with Etemad Newspaper and sentenced him to one year in prison.³¹

In March of the following year, the FFMI issued a report confirming evidence of "blunt force trauma to Amini's body while in the custody of the Moral Security Police." The report attributed the cause of death to "physical violence" and held the Iranian government responsible.³²

2. Mohammad Arian Khoshgovar



The complaint filed by the family of 18-year-old Mohammad Arian Khoshgovar – who was killed in Sanandaj – was closed without any explanation given to the family. Before the case was dismissed, Hassan Asgari, the then-governor of Sanandaj, threatened the Khoshgovar family, telling them to "accept blood money or face consequences."

³⁰ IRNA News Agency, October 7, 2022. www.irna.ir/xjKHHQ

³¹ Shargh Newspaper, October 17, 2023. <https://www.sharghdaily.com/fa/tiny/news-901373>

³² "Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran," Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, United Nations, March 19, 2024, page 62. <https://www.iranrights.org/library/document/4144>.

Mohammad Arian Khoshgavar was 18 years old when he was severely injured by Special Forces using batons and knives during the protests in Sanandaj on November 17, 2022. After being hospitalized in Kowsar Hospital for four months, he died from his injuries on March 13, 2023.

The Khoshgavar family filed a complaint with the Sanandaj court regarding the death of their son. The governor of Sanandaj contacted them and offered blood money in exchange for dropping the case, warning that they would otherwise face “security repercussions.”

According to existing judicial documents, on May 31, 2023, the Investigator of the Kordestan Province Military Court sent three official letters to various institutions. In these letters, he requested from Kowsar Hospital in Sananda, Khoshgavar’s medical records and asked the Sanandaj Forensic Medicine Organization to determine the cause of death. He also requested the Sanandaj Police to investigate the potential beating of Khoshgavar by security forces. However, according to a Kurdish human rights organization, these requests yielded no results. Ultimately, pressure from security services led to the case being closed without any conclusions or accountability to the victim’s family.³³

3. Kian Pirfalak



On November 16, 2022, the killing of 9-year-old Kian Pirfalak in the city of Izeh shocked the world and sparked widespread outrage. Although Kian’s parents explicitly stated that they had witnessed security forces opening fire on their vehicle, the government never took responsibility for Kian’s death. In a surprising twist, the authorities arrested one of Kian’s fellow townsmen, someone who had protested the killing, and falsely accused him of being responsible for the boy’s murder.

Kian Pirfalak, a 9-year-old from Izeh, was shot and killed on November 16, 2022, while riding in the family car with his parents and younger brother. His father, Meisam Pirfalak, was also seriously injured and was hospitalized for four months. Kian’s mother, Zeinab Mola’irad, clearly stated that she witnessed security forces firing directly at their car. She filed a formal complaint with the Third Criminal Court of Khuzestan Province.³⁴

Security forces arrested Abbas (Mojahed) Kurkur, a protester who had expressed outrage at the death of Kian Pirfalak, and accused him of the murder and the deaths of six other protesters killed during

³³ Hengaw, September 3, 2023. <https://hengaw.net/fa/news/archive/61476>

³⁴ IranWire, June 3, 2023. <https://iranwire.com/fa/news-1/117188>

demonstrations. Despite being tortured to force a confession, he steadfastly maintained his innocence and refused to make a false confession.

On December 24, 2023, Branch 39 of Iran's Supreme Court upheld Kurkur's three death sentences on various charges, including "waging war against God by brandishing a weapon with the intent to harm civilians," "spreading terror and corruption on earth by committing war crimes," "disrupting public order," "causing grievous physical harm resulting in the death of seven people, including Kian Pirfalak," "causing grievous damage to public and private property," and "forming and participating in an armed insurgent group against the Islamic Republic."³⁵

Kian Pirfalak's parents have explicitly denied the accusation that Abbas Kurkur was responsible for the killing of their son. They have formally signed a notarized document stating that they personally witnessed the security forces kill their child and that they have no complaints against Kurkur. Despite this, Kurkur remains at risk of execution. In addition, following clashes on the first anniversary of Kian's death, security forces placed Kian's mother under house arrest on June 20, 2023.³⁶

The Pirfalak family's lawsuit against the security forces remains unresolved, with no judicial action taken for more than two years. The case is still pending before the Second Investigation Branch of the Revolutionary Court in Izeh. Despite this, the Iranian government has officially listed Kian Pirfalak as one of the "martyrs" of the regime.

4. Yahya Rahimi³⁷



Yahya Rahimi, a 31-year-old man, was fatally shot on October 8, 2022, in Sanandaj protests while sitting in his car during a traffic jam. The graphic image of his blood-covered body slumped over the steering wheel circulated widely on social media, sparking public outrage.

On October 8, the city of Sanandaj witnessed widespread protests. Citizens gathered along Sixth Bahman (Pasdaran) Street, some marching on the sidewalks while others honked their car horns

³⁵ Radio Zamaneh, June 19, 2024. <https://www.radiozamaneh.com/822265/>

³⁶ IranWire, June 14, 2023. <https://iranwire.com/fa/news-1/117542>

³⁷ For more information on Yahya Rahimi's case, see his page on Omid Memorial case on Abdorrahman Boroumand Center website, <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8739/yahya-rahimi>

in support of protesters. Around noon, armed plainclothes security forces wielding batons, clubs, and firearms attacked the protesters. Citizens captured on their phones the moment these forces approached Rahimi's vehicle, shattered its windows, and attacked him. In an attempt to escape, Rahimi drove away, but only moments later, according to eyewitnesses, an armed officer shot him in the head at close range (half a meter) with a shotgun. Rahimi died instantly, and the attackers quickly fled the scene. Soon after, uniformed security forces arrived, collected Rahimi's body, and left the area.

Despite only one 12 mm shotgun bullet hitting Rahimi's left temple, the impact was so severe that even some family members and friends were unable to recognize him in the video that circulated on social media.

A relative stated that the family first learned of Rahimi's death through these distressing images. They searched local hospitals without success, eventually receiving an anonymous call instructing his father to visit Sanandaj Revolutionary Guard's Intelligence for identification.

Rahimi's burial permit, dated October 9, 2022, listed the cause of death as "severe brain tissue damage, skull fracture, and impact from a high-speed projectile."

Rahimi's burial took place under heavy security at midnight on October 9 in Behshat Mohammadi Cemetery in Sanandaj, with only a few family members allowed to attend. The family had requested to bury him in his home village, but intelligence officials denied the request. During the burial, numerous plainclothes officers and armed personnel equipped with walkie-talkies and batons were present.

Rahimi's family filed a formal complaint in Sanandaj seeking justice for his killing. However, judicial authorities continuously delayed the case and tried to discourage the family. Officials offered various explanations, including blaming Kurdish parties or other protesters for his death, claiming the judge was unavailable, or stating that the judge had been replaced or was on leave. Despite these efforts, the family remained persistent in their pursuit of justice. According to an informed source, on the anniversary of Yahya Rahimi's death, intelligence officers told his family that no one will be tried for killing Rahimi. Even if there was a trial, no one would take responsibility.

According to the source, the family does not have a lawyer. Although one lawyer was willing to represent them pro bono, the court did not allow the lawyer to take on the case.

After seven months, authorities finally admitted to the family that "a military officer" had killed Rahimi and that the case was transferred to a military court. Subsequent follow-ups revealed that the case had been sent to Tehran for review, with the family advised to wait for further updates from judicial authorities there. Until the fall of 2024, each time the family followed up on the case, they were told: "We are waiting for orders from Tehran to review the surveillance footage." The source added that all

the surveillance cameras were collected on the very first day of the incident.

In an interview on May 26, 2023, Rahimi's father stated that he had no hope in the judicial process. Addressing the Supreme Leader of Iran, he asked why he is refusing to allow the United Nations to come to Iran and investigate the killing of his son.³⁸

5. Mohammad Amini



Mohammad Amini was 39 years old when he was shot and killed by security forces during protests in the Taqtaqan neighborhood of Sanandaj on October 8, 2022. Branch 101 of the Sanandaj Criminal Court sentenced his brother, Hassan, to six and half months in prison and 40 lashes for his advocacy efforts related to his brother's death.

On the night of October 8, 2022, around 8 p.m., security forces shot Mohammad Amini from behind using a Kalashnikov, hitting his heart. Despite the efforts of doctors to save him after he was rushed to Kowsar Hospital, he died from his injuries.³⁹

According to an informed source, after the family of Mohammad Amini filed a complaint regarding his killing, officials from the provincial governor's office, the county governor's office, and Sanandaj's Intelligence attempted to dissuade them from pursuing the case by offering financial compensation (blood money). According to a reliable source, the family was told through a phone call that government forces have not killed Amini and his death was caused by "hostile individuals." Nevertheless, the family was urged to accept the financial compensation, and drop the case, "as it's too late anyway."

After seven months, the Supreme Court referred the complaint case to Branch 4 of the Investigation Office of the Public and Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj for further review. In response to the family's follow-ups, judicial authorities verbally stated that they had asked the IRGC, the police force, and the Sanandaj Intelligence Department to clarify which military organization was present at the scene of Amini's killing. However, all three entities responded that their forces were not present at the location of Amini's death.

³⁸ Voice of America, May 26, 2023, <https://ir.voanews.com/a/7110917.html>

³⁹ Kurdpa, October 9, 2022. <https://kurdpa.net/fa/news/>

Further, Amini's brother, Hassan, was arrested on June 8, 2023, while attending a gathering of grieving families at the graves of those killed during the protests in Saqqez and Bukan. He was transferred to Bukan prison. On June 16, 2023, he was released from Bukan prison after posting bail. He was later tried in Branch 101 of the Bukan Criminal Court for "disturbing public order" and sentenced to six and a half months in prison and 40 lashes.⁴⁰

Currently, the family's criminal complaint is still under review by Branch 4 of the Investigation Office of the Public and Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj for further review. At the same time, authorities continue their efforts to convince them to withdraw the complaint by offering financial compensation and harassing the deceased's brother with threats of bringing new charges against him.

6. Shirin Alizadeh⁴¹



Shirin Alizadeh was 36 years old when she was shot and killed by security forces in front of her husband and seven-year-old child as they drove through Abbasabad, Mazandaran on September 22, 2022.

The recording of the moment she was shot made her death one of the most harrowing examples of government violence. In the video, released after her death, Alizadeh is seen filming a scene in which a female protester is shot, and in shock she says, "They killed someone's daughter." Moments later, a bullet hits Alizadeh herself, the camera falls to the ground, and blood covers the lens. The final image is her husband's shocked face, staring at his wife in disbelief.⁴²

The Alizadeh family filed a complaint about her murder with local authorities, but the judicial authorities refused to accept their case.

The Alizadeh family's complaint was not investigated by the Mazandaran judiciary, which declared itself incompetent, prompting them to send the case to the Supreme Court. On October 30, 2023, the Supreme Court returned the case to the Mazandaran judiciary for further legal review. However, according to the

⁴⁰ Hengaw, July 6, 2023. <https://hengaw.net/fa/news/archive/60389>

⁴¹ For more information on Shirin Alizadeh's case, see his page on Omid Memorial case on Abdorrahman Boroumand Center website, <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8956/shirin-alizadeh-khansari>

⁴² BBC Persian, August 29, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/ckk1n03496ro>

Alizadeh family's attorney, the local court has not yet begun to investigate the matter.⁴³

On August 17, 2023, Shirin Alizadeh's husband, Mohammad (Kurosh) Vaziri, was arrested at her gravesite on the anniversary of her birthday and transferred to Dastgerd Prison in Isfahan.⁴⁴ In addition, Shirin's sister, Nasrin Alizadeh, was arrested on August 23, 2023, for seeking justice for her sister's death and for protesting Vaziri's arrest.⁴⁵ Nasrin was released on bail on September 2, 2023.⁴⁶

On September 10, 2023, Mohammad Vaziri was released on bail. Later, on November 5, 2023, he was tried before the First Branch of the Revolutionary Court of Isfahan. He was sentenced to two months in prison.⁴⁷

7. Siavash Mahmudi



Siavash Mahmudi was 16 years old when he was shot and killed by security forces near a Basij base in the Nazi Abad neighborhood of Tehran on September 22, 2022. The forensic report stated that the cause of death was "a frontal shot."

His body was handed over to his family after a legal medical examination, on the condition that they sign a written pledge not to file a complaint.

Despite these restrictions, the Mahmudi family eventually filed a formal complaint with Branch 27 of Tehran Criminal Court, accusing government agents of responsibility for their son's death. In October and December 2022, the court twice asked Branch 10 of the Tehran Police to investigate the case, but these requests went ignored. Finally, the Criminal Court transferred the case to the Tehran Military Prosecutor's Office on the grounds that the actions of the security forces during the "riots" were not subject to judicial oversight but were part of their "military duties."

On February 14, 2023, the Seventh Branch of the Tehran Military Prosecutor's Office transferred the

43 Emtedad News Channel, September 11, 2023. <https://t.me/emtedadnet/84418>

44 Emtedad News Channel, September 11, 2023. <https://t.me/emtedadnet/81558>

45 HRANA News Agency, August 23, 2023. <https://www.hra-news.org/?p=426382>

46 Zan Website, September 3, 2023. <https://jinhaagency.com/fa/rwzanh/nsryn-lyzadhkhwansary-ba-qrar-wthyqh-azad-shd-40188>

47 Emtedad News Channel, September 11, 2023. <https://t.me/emtedadnet/84418>

investigation to the Mohammad Rasulullah Revolutionary Guards Command, the very organization the Mahmudi family had filed complaints against. According to them, Mahmudi had been killed near the Shahid Raja'i Basij Base.

In response to the Tehran Military Prosecutor's request dated February 22, 2023, an inspector from the Mohammad Rasulullah Corps reported that according to investigations conducted at the Shahid Raja'i Basij Base, Major Mehdi Ezzati – the base's operations officer during the protests – stated that his unit only used launchers and paintball guns and that no live ammunition was deployed. Despite this, the case was returned to Branch 1 of the Criminal Court in District 27, due to "uncertainty about the killer." On March 10, 18 months after Siavash Mahmudi's death, the police investigator asked for footage from the neighborhood's cameras and ordered that witnesses and store owners be interviewed. He also asked for Mahmudi's medical file from the Baharlu Hospital, even though he had been transferred to Kashani Hospital after being wounded. There is no information on whether the cameras' footage of that day were available 18 months later or if eyewitnesses were found. As of July 2024, there have been no updates on the investigation. There is no information in the case file about the bullet extracted from Mahmudi's head and where it has been stored, and the weapon used to shoot him has not been identified.⁴⁸

On August 2, 2024, Siavash's mother, Leila Mahdavi, said on Instagram that security forces told her, "Your son was climbing the Basij wall and we had the right to shoot him." This contradicted their earlier claim that "unknown persons" had shot her son.

Mahdavi stated that instead of justice, the authorities fabricated charges against her for "disturbing public opinion." Security forces had summoned both her and her daughter, threatening, "If you don't come, we will take you from your home." Earlier, on August 24, 2023, security officials raided her home, confiscated her and Siavash's phones, and summoned them to Evin Court.

Leila Mahdavi remains steadfast in her quest for justice, stating, "I am just a seeker of justice. Seeking justice is not a crime."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Iran International, July 19, 2024. <https://www.iranintl.com/202407188832>

⁴⁹ Leila Mahdavi's Instagram Page, August 13, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/p/C-NRONbOcf_/?igsh=NmpqaXI0b3pic3Qx

8. Mohammad Javad Zahedi Saravi⁵⁰



Mohammad Javad Zahedi Sari was 20 years old when he was shot with a pellet gun on September 21, 2022, in Enqelab Street, Sari. He later died after being transferred to a hospital in Qaemshahr. Mahsa Yazdani, Zahedi's mother, was sentenced to 13 years in prison for seeking justice for the death of her son.

Mohammad Javad Zahedi's body was handed over to his family two days after his death on the condition that they sign a written pledge not to make "provocative statements during the funeral." He was buried in his mother's village, Valashkala.

Zahedi's family filed a complaint with the Sari Revolutionary Court regarding the murder of their son. Mahsa Yazdani stated that during interrogations, judicial authorities informed her that "no footage of the moment Zahedi was killed was recorded and it is impossible to identify the killer." The Zahedi family does not accept this justification by the judiciary, citing the central and busy location where their son was killed, and rejecting the possibility that no CCTV cameras were operating on Enqelab Street.

In response to the family's inquiries, judicial officials gave contradictory answers. In another claim, they stated that "the Mojahedin and thugs" who wore "police uniforms" during the protests were responsible for Zahedi's death; however, they still did not identify any individual as a suspect in the murder. The judicial authorities even offered a financial settlement to dissuade Zahedi's family from pursuing the case. In response, the family declared that they would not "exchange their child's blood for any amount of money" and insisted on "identifying the killer."

After losing hope in the judicial process, Yazdani shared the story of her son's murder on social media. On August 22, 2023, she was arrested at her home by security forces on charges of "criminal activity on social media" and transferred to Sari Prison. After two months of detention, Yazdani was temporarily released from Sari Prison with an electronic ankle bracelet after securing bail.⁵¹

On October 7, 2023, the Branch one of the Sari Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Zoqi, sentenced Mahsa Yazdani to a total of 13 years in prison on charges of "insulting sacred beliefs,"

50 For more information on Mohammad Javad Zahedi Sari's case, see his page on Omid Memorial case on Abdorrahman Boroumand Center website <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8958/mohammad-javad-zahedi-saravi>

51 Shargh Newspaper, November 20, 2023. <https://www.sharghdaily.com/fa/tiny/news-906482>



Mahsa Yazdani with an electronic ankle bracelet at her son's grave. Dadban X account

"inciting the public to disrupt national security," "insulting the leadership," and "propaganda against the regime," of which five years will be enforced.⁵²

In her defense, Yazdani told Judge Zoqi: "Until today, I didn't know what politics was until they brought my son's dead body to me. I took a piece of paper and went to seek justice, only to be passed from one room to another, and in the end, nothing happened."

Meisam Musavi, the Zahedi family's lawyer, told Shargh Newspaper, "The important thing about Mahsa Yazdani's case is that this mother initially sought justice for her son through legal means and was not active on social media at the time. When she saw that the doors were closed, she raised her voice on social media."⁵³

On November 20, 2023, Yazdani's lawyer learned that the 13-year sentence had been upheld on appeal.⁵⁴

Mitra Zahedi, Zahedi's sister, responded to her mother's 13-year sentence by writing: "Where in the law does it say that the mother of a victim should be

imprisoned for seeking justice for her child while the murderer walks freely in the streets? It seems that the roles of plaintiff and defendant are reversed. My mother is a grieving person seeking justice. My mother does not deserve prison."

At the time of this report, Yazdani's and Zahedi's Instagram accounts had been closed.

52 HRANA News Agency, August 30, 2023. <https://www.hra-news.org/?p=437898>

53 Shargh Newspaper, November 20, 2023. <https://www.sharghdaily.com/fa/tiny/news-906482>

54 IranWire, November 20, 2023. <https://iranwire.com/fa/news-1/122678>

9. Nika Shakarami⁵⁵



Nika Shakarami was 17 years old when she went missing after taking part in the protests in Tehran on September 20, 2022. After nine days without contact or information, her dead body was found in the Kahrizak Forensic Examiner's Office. Images that emerged after Nika's death showed her active participation in the protests. Her young age and zest for life captured the attention of Iranians and people around the world, making her a symbol of the "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests.

The authorities attempted to label her death a "suicide" by circulating fabricated documentaries, detaining family members, and staging events. This claim was vehemently denied by her family, which only drew more attention to the circumstances of Nika's death. Nevertheless, a case was opened in the Tehran Criminal Court to investigate her death, which remains unresolved and suspended without judicial action.

Nika Shakarami went missing during the protests in Tehran on September 20, 2022. On September 29, 2022, Tehran Criminal Investigation Department officials informed her family that her body had been found at the Kahrizak Forensic Department. Shakarami was buried on October 3, 2022, without the presence of her mother and in the presence of a significant number of security officials, in the cemetery of the village of Hayat al-Ghayb, located 40 kilometers from Khorramabad. The cause of death listed on her death certificate was "multiple injuries caused by a hard object." Some of Nika's belongings, including her cell phone, computer, and identification card, were never returned to her family.

Authorities and state media attempted to portray Shakarami's death as a suicide due to a fall from a building, disseminating dozens of reports, fabricating documents, and exerting influence to support this narrative. Mohsen Shakarami, Nika's uncle, and Atash Shakarami, Nika's aunt, were arrested by security agents after the funeral on



Nika Shakarami, Tehran,
September 20, 2022

⁵⁵ For more information on Nika Shakarami's case, see his page on Omid Memorial case on Abdorrahman Boroumand Center website <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8756/nika-shakarami>

October 3, 2022, and pressured for 48 hours in front of cameras to confirm the government's story of Nika's death. Their testimonies were used in a documentary that aimed to portray Nika's death as a suicide, which was broadcast on the evening of October 5, 2022, during the news segment known as "20:30" on Channel Two of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

Nika Shakarami's mother, Nasrin Shakarami, rejected the claim of suicide, stating, "I personally checked my daughter's body several times after receiving it. Her body was completely intact, with no fractures or bruises on her arms or legs. She had received a very severe blow, her skull was crushed inward, and her jaw was broken."

The day after Nika's funeral, Tehran's then-prosecutor announced that a case had been opened in Tehran's Criminal Court to investigate her death. State media also reported the arrest of eight construction workers from a retail building in connection with Nika's death. Security forces closely monitored and pressured Atash Shakarami, Nika's aunt, even after her release two days after her initial arrest. Several months later, the authorities reopened a case against Mohsen Shakarami, Nika's uncle, who was released on bail following a four-day detention, charging him with "spreading false information" and "inciting people to take to the streets," and subjected him to regular pressure. Officials demanded that the Shakarami family declare their daughter's death a suicide, which would close the case.

Commenting on the case, Nasrin Shakarami said, "Those responsible for this tragic incident should accept their responsibility. I want the ambiguities in Nika's case to be investigated transparently and without pressure." According to Shakarami, evidence in Nika's case file includes photographs taken by Tehran's Criminal Investigation Department showing Nika's body dated September 21, 2022. The authorities had claimed ignorance of her whereabouts until October 1, 2022.

The family's complaint remains pending without any judicial follow-up. The Shakarami family has refused to pursue the case, stating that they do not believe in the legitimacy of the judiciary. At the same time, they are unwilling to close the case, as this would support the government's claim that Nika committed suicide.⁵⁶

10. Zahedan's Bloody Friday

On September 30, 2022, during the "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests, the worshipers of the Makki Mosque in Zahedan, who had taken to the streets to demonstrate along with bystanders, were met by continuous gunfire from government forces. Hundreds of people, including women and children, were killed and injured. In response to demands for justice from several families and survivors – such as the families of Mohammad Eqbal NaiebZehi, Omid Shahnavazi, Mostafa Barichi, Ahmad Sarani, Hamzeh Naru'i, and Mohammad Sediq Naru'i – judicial authorities prosecuted seven officers from Zahedan's Police Station 16. However, the court concluded that these officers had not fired directly at anyone and had only fired into the air to disperse the crowd.

⁵⁶ Nika Shakarami's Omid Memorial case on Abdorrahman Boroumand Center website. <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8756/nika-shakarami>



At noon on September 30, 2022, amid the ongoing protests in Sistan and Baluchestan, worshipers gathered at the Makki Mosque in Zahedan after Friday prayers to protest the alleged rape of a 15-year-old Baluch girl by a police officer. They marched to Police Station 16 on Razi Street, which is close to the mosque. Security forces, including Special Forces and plainclothes officers disguised in Baluchi clothing, had already positioned themselves inside the station and on the rooftops of surrounding buildings. They opened fire on the demonstrators and fired tear gas into the mosque. As anger grew among the demonstrators, some threw stones at the police station. The relentless gunfire in the streets and inside the Makki Mosque compound, combined with the strategic positioning of government forces, left little room for the men, women and children attending Friday prayers to escape. As a result, hundreds were killed or injured. This day became known as “Bloody Friday” in the history of Iranian protests, due to the high number of casualties.

The exact number of people killed and injured by government forces on September 30 remains unclear. According to investigations by the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission and reports by the Halvash News Agency, at least 104 people were killed;⁵⁷ at least 15 of whom were under the age of 18.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Note: The Boroumand Center has been able to gather statistics on 111 deaths, with documentation completed for 94 victims

⁵⁸ Haalvsh News Agency, September 29, 2023. <https://haalvsh.org/2023/09/29/>; “Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, United Nations, March 19, 2024. <https://www.iranrights.org/library/document/4144>.

On October 1, 2022, the Security Council of Sistan and Baluchestan issued a statement acknowledging the deaths of several “worshippers and citizens” in what it described as an exchange of gunfire between “police forces and attacking rioters,” without specifying the number of casualties. On December 10, 2022, Hossein Modarresi Khiabani, the then-governor of Sistan and Baluchestan, officially reported that 35 people had died in the incident. He stated that Ali Khamenei had ordered that the “innocent” people who died in this “incident” be considered martyrs. Modarresi also reported that 24 people were injured, adding, “It is expected that this number will increase to 35, and if they are recognized as innocent, they will be registered as war veterans.”

Modarresi also announced the “dismissal and replacement” of Zahedan’s Police Chief, and the Head of Police Station 16, and the “reassignment” of the provincial police commander, Ahmad Taheri.⁵⁹ However, during the ceremony to introduce the new police commander, appreciation was expressed for the “efforts and services” of Ahmad Taheri.⁶⁰ According to available information, after his transfer, General Ahmad Taheri was appointed as an advisor to General Ahmadreza Radan, the national police commander, on Baluchestan affairs.⁶¹

This move was not enough to quell the tense atmosphere in Baluchestan or prevent the weekly protests that took place in Zahedan after Friday prayers. On January 30, 2023, Molavi Abdolhamid, the Sunni Imam of the Makki Mosque and one of the most influential

figures in Sistan and Baluchestan, met with the families of the victims and those injured in the Bloody Friday incident. During this meeting, he described the Bloody Friday massacre as an “unprecedented act of injustice” on a global scale, and he directly challenged the authorities by detailing the violent crackdown on that day. Molavi Abdulhamid stressed that almost 100 people were killed and more than 300 injured, many of whom were simply attending Friday prayers in the mosque when they were shot at by security forces positioned around them, firing from four directions. He also questioned the credibility of the government’s investigations into the events of Bloody Friday, asking, “The officers who fired the shots say they were given orders. Who gave those orders and why are they not being held accountable?” Abdulhamid went on to highlight the grave consequences of the crackdown, noting that many worshippers lost their lives, while many others were left injured, blinded, or paralyzed.⁶²



The sign says: “In our Iran, asking about justice is like a hot [bullet]. Al Arabyia, January 23, 2023

59 IRNA News Agency, December 10, 2022. www.irna.ir/xjLbXJ

60 ILNA News Agency, December 9, 2022. <https://www.ilna.ir/fa/tiny/news-1295921>

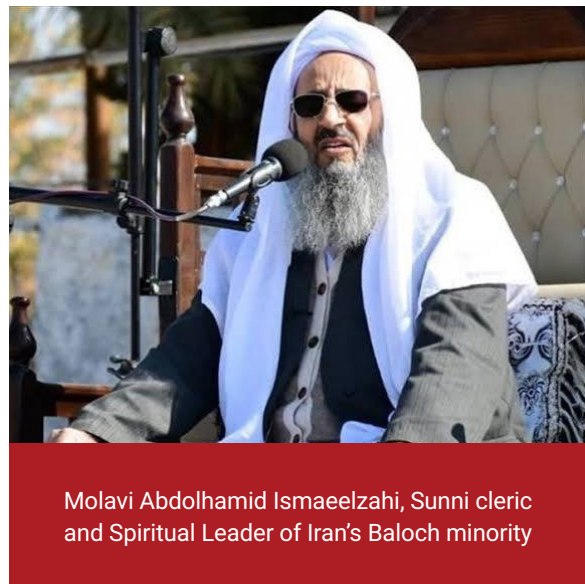
61 Haalvsh News Agency, September 24, 2023. <https://haalvsh.org/2023/09/24/>

62 Molavi Abdolhamid’s Telegram Channel, January 30, 2023. <https://t.me/molanaabdolhamid/5572>

On April 12, 2023, Abolfazl Mahgoli, the head of the military judiciary in Sistan and Baluchestan, announced the arrest of two officers who had opened fire on people on September 30th, 2022, in Zahedan and confirmed the formation of a case for judicial review. He stated that the officers had been charged with “excessive use of force” and that the case had been referred to the court after hearing the testimonies of both the plaintiffs and the defendants. Mahgoli also noted that the first court session, involving seven officers from Police Station 16, would be held in mid-May 2023 in the presence of the plaintiffs and defendants.⁶³

The first hearing in the case of the “Bloody Friday” massacre in Zahedan was delayed but was finally held on February 7, 2024, at the Armed Forces Judicial Complex in Zahedan, presided over by Judge Mohammad Marzieh. The session, which lasted about five hours, included testimony from some of the families of the victims and the injured. Judicial officials urged the plaintiffs to accept financial compensation (blood money) as a settlement, but the families rejected this offer and demanded the harshest punishment for those responsible, including the perpetrators and those who gave the orders. During the hearing, the authorities prevented the presence and testimony of a cameraman from the Makki Mosque, whom the victims’ families had requested. It also emerged that the defendants had been released on bail, contrary to earlier claims by officials that they were in custody.⁶⁴

Molavi Abdolhamid, in his sermon on February 9, 2024, expressed hope that the judges would remain impartial and not succumb to pressure from influential figures or institutions. He also criticized the pressure on the victims’ families to accept blood money and stressed the need to listen to their demands. Abdulhamid stressed that the judiciary should not side with the ruling authorities and that the people and the grieving families want those responsible for this “crime” to be held accountable, regardless of their affiliation or rank.



Molavi Abdolhamid Ismaeelzahi, Sunni cleric and Spiritual Leader of Iran's Baloch minority

The second session of the hearing was held on February 12, 2024. In this session, however, the court barred the injured, witnesses, and the families’ lawyers from attending. Judge Marzieh stated that there was no need for eyewitness testimony because the “CCTV footage has already been reviewed.”

Following the trial, judicial officials informed the families of the victims that the accused officers from Police Station 16 had not fired directly at the protesters, claiming that they had only fired warning shots into the air to disperse the crowd. They further argued that because many security forces were deployed throughout the city on September 30, 2022, it was impossible to identify which officer fired the fatal

63 Entekhab News Agency, April 13, 2023, Haalvsh News Agency, February 12, 2024. <https://haalvsh.org/2024/02/12> <https://www.entekhab.ir/0031xD>

64 Haalvsh News Agency, February 7, 2024. <https://haalvsh.org/2024/02/07/>

shots. The judiciary urged the families to accept financial compensation (blood money) as a solution.⁶⁵ In response to these developments, Molavi Abdolhamid expressed his dissatisfaction via his X (formerly Twitter) account on March 11, 2024.⁶⁶ He criticized the trial, pointing out that while some police officers had been summoned, the commanders and members of the IRGC and Basij involved in the massacre had never been held accountable. Abdulhamid stressed that those who ordered and carried out the attack on civilians have remained untouched by the judicial process.

A detailed report by the FFMI, published on March 19, 2002, thoroughly investigated the Zahedan massacre. Based on substantial evidence, the FFMI concluded that the massacre was premeditated, with security forces given explicit orders to violently suppress protesters who posed no real threat to public safety. The report confirmed that security forces fired on demonstrators from inside the police station, from rooftops, and even from a helicopter.

The UN report also highlighted how the regime used the bodies of those killed as tools to exert influence, pressuring families to waive their legal claims in exchange for receiving the remains of their loved ones. Some families were unable to obtain death certificates or received them only after agreeing to declare that their relatives had not died during the protests. Families who pursued legal action were often pressured to accept blood money to drop their cases.

The FFMI also concluded that the crackdown in Zahedan was markedly “discriminatory” and different from the treatment in other parts of the country.

⁶⁵ Haalvsh News Agency, February 12, 2024. <https://haalvsh.org/2024/02/12/>

⁶⁶ Molavi Abdolhamid X account, March 11, 2024. <https://x.com/AbdolhamidNet/status/1767082840263364970>

Part 3: Cases Where Responsibility for Killings Was Attributed to Government Forces, but Perpetrators Were Not Identified

In the cases reviewed in this part, the judiciary held security forces responsible for the killings but did not identify or prosecute the perpetrators. Instead, the families of the victims were offered financial compensation (blood money). However, most of the families were harassed and arrested by the security forces in order to pressure them to drop the case.

1. Abolfazl Adinehzadeh ⁶⁷



Abolfazl Adinehzadeh was 16 years old when he was shot and killed by security forces during protests outside Ferdowsi University in Mashhad on October 8, 2022. Scores of pellets were lodged in Abolfazl's body. Adinehzadeh's family was pressured and arrested for seeking justice for their son's death, and authorities also prosecuted and convicted the family's lawyer.

Security forces forced Adinehzadeh's family to bury their son's body in the cemetery of Najafabad village in North Khorasan Province.⁶⁸

In response to the murder of their son, the Adinehzadeh family filed a complaint with the Mashhad court.

According to the family's lawyer, Khosro Alikordi, on March 7 and May 29, 2023 Ali Adinehzadeh, Goldasteh Hosseini, and Marzieh Adinehzadeh – the father, mother, and sister of Abolfazl Adinehzadeh – were summoned to the Office of the Prosecutor of Mashhad and Faruj and accused of “propaganda against the regime.” On June 16, 2023, all three were arrested by security agents on charges of “propaganda against the regime.” They were transferred to Bojnord and Shirvan prisons. The Adinehzadeh

⁶⁷ For more information on Abolfazl Adinehzadeh's case, see his Omid Memorial case on Abdorrahman Boroumand Center website <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8961/abolfazl-adinehzadeh>

⁶⁸ Radio Farda, June 21, 2023. <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32468518.html>

family was temporarily released from prison on June 21, 2023, after posting bail.⁶⁹

On November 8, 2023, Alikordi provided details about the case in an interview with the media based outside Iran. He stated that following investigations by Branch 211 of the Mashhad Prosecutor's Office, the Intelligence Ministry and the IRGC Intelligence in Khorasan reported to the prosecutor that Abolfazl Adinehzadeh had been killed by Special Forces. The investigating judge of Branch 211 issued a verdict of incompetence and sent the case to the military tribunal in Mashhad.⁷⁰

On November 4, 2023, Branch One of the Investigation Office of the Khorasan Military Prosecutor's Office issued a non-prosecution order or a "nolle prosequi," indicating that the case related to the family's complaint against the armed forces is closed and recommending that the family accepts blood money from public treasury.

The Adinehzadeh family objected to this decision, stating that they were not interested in receiving blood money and only wanted to identify their son's killer. The family has repeatedly asked for the footage from the over 20 cameras of the area.

On November 6, 2023, Abolfazl's mother posted the image of the order on her Instagram page. She stated that a few days before September 16, 2023, Ali Adinehzadeh, Abolfazl's father, received a phone call summoning him to the prosecutor's office in Faruj. Security agents present at the office threatened Adinehzadeh, telling him, "If you cooperate with the security forces, your son's case will be resolved. Otherwise, we won't allow the case to proceed." Adinehzadeh had firmly refused their request, stating, "We will never cooperate with you because there is a sea of blood between us since my son's murder." She also stated that their previous lawyer had also been told that the case will not be pursued unless the Adinehzadeh family remains silent.⁷¹

On July 25, 2024, Ali Adinehzadeh was arrested after being summoned to Branch One of the Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor's Investigation Office in Quchan and transferred to a prison in that city. In a phone call from prison, he responded to his arrest by saying, "Did you think that sending me to prison would make me bow my head? No!"⁷²



Ruling of the Military Prosecution of Khorasan Province, Branch 1. Posted on Marzie Adinehzadeh's Instagram page. November 6, 2023.

69 Radio Farda, June 21, 2023. <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32468518.html>

70 Radio Farda, November 8, 2023. <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-abolfazladinehzadeh-/32674970.html>

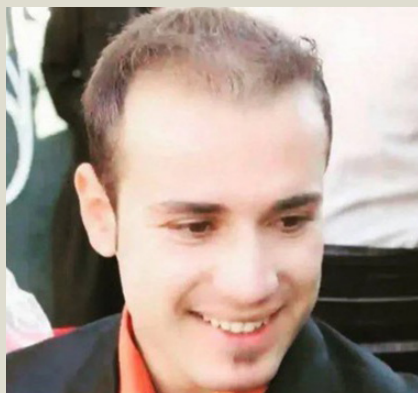
71 Marzieh Adinehzadeh's Instagram Page, November 6, 2023. https://www.instagram.com/p/CzUQOHfr6o5/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_id=b41c7cd1-a278-4ac1-9137-b6af18c52156&img_index=1

72 Marzieh Adinehzadeh's Twitter Page, August 3, 2024. <https://x.com/marzieadinezade/status/1819366058391703683>

In response to her husband's arrest, Abolfazl's mother posted a video on her daughter's page saying, "Instead of finding the murderer of my child, they arrested my husband."⁷³ Adinehzadeh was released from Quchan Prison on September 10, 2024 after posting bail.⁷⁴

Adinehzadeh's lawyer, Khosro Alikordi, was tried by the Revolutionary Court of Mashhad, presided over by Hadi Mansuri, on November 13, 2023 on charges of "spreading falsehoods through social media and failing to maintain confidentiality" and "conducting propaganda in favor of groups opposing the regime." He was sentenced to one year in prison, two years of compulsory residence in the city of Nehbandan in South Khorasan Province, a two-year ban on practicing law, a two-year ban on leaving the country, and a ban on activities on social media. On February 17, 2024, he started serving his sentence in Mashhad's Vakilabad Prison.⁷⁵

2. Fereidun Mahmudi



Fereidun Mahmudi was 32 years old when he was killed by Special Forces in the city of Saqqez on September 19, 2022. Mahmudi's family faced pressure from the security authorities to give up their pursuit of justice in exchange for blood money. As a result of this pressure, Mahmudi's wife closed the case of her husband's murder without accepting the blood money.

Fereidun Mahmudi was shot by Special Forces during a demonstration in his hometown of Saqqez on September 19, 2022, three days after Mahsa Amini's murder. He was injured and then beaten to death. Following his death, officers from the Saqqez Criminal Investigation Department contacted his father to inform him of Fereidun's arrest.

For two days, the officers kept Mahmudi's wife and family in the dark and interrogated them four times. Finally, during the interrogation, they told Fereidun's uncle that he had been killed by unknown assailants. They asked his wife, Mrs. Habibi, for permission to arrange the burial, but she refused. Finally, they informed her that Fereidun's body had been transferred to Aichi Cemetery for burial.

On the morning of September 21, 2022, his wife and several family members went to the cemetery, where Fereidun was buried at around 5 a.m. in the presence of the public prosecutor, the commander

73 Radio Farda, August 1, 2024. <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/no-information-about-ali-adinehzadeh-after-arrest/33058120.html>

74 HRANA News Agency, September 10, 2024. <https://www.hra-news.org/?p=480961>

75 Radio Farda, February 1, 2024. <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/khosro-alikordi-iranian-lawyer-imprisoned/32822313.html>

of the Saqqez Revolutionary Guard, security forces, and several close family members. When Habibi called for a memorial on the fortieth day after her husband's death, a woman speaking Kurdish on behalf of a security agency contacted her and threatened her, saying, "Your child has lost his father; don't let him lose his mother as well."

Mahmudi's family filed a complaint with the Saqqez court regarding the murder of their son. The Saqqez prosecutor suggested that Mrs. Habibi register her husband as a "government martyr" with the Martyrs Foundation, and the governor of Saqqez also offered her a plot of land. Mrs. Habibi declined these offers. On April 18, 2023, Habibi was summoned to the public prosecutor's office, where she was again offered blood money.

She refused the offer and demanded the identification of her husband's killer, stating, "I have complained several times. I mean, I complained three or four times, and each time the case got worse. They always gave me some excuse. Finally, in the military prosecutor's office, I was told that they had convicted the Special Forces. If you want to pursue the case to find out which officer was involved, you have to accept the blood money first."

According to Mrs. Habibi, the First Branch of the Military Prosecutor's Office in Saqqez and Baneh told her in response to her insistence on identifying her husband's killer, "There were so many officers in the area that day that it's impossible to say who it was." She argued, "The gun given to each officer has a serial number and you register it; the same goes for the bullets. You must know who did it," to which they replied, "No, it's completely unclear."

Mahmudi's parents were also offered blood money. His mother released a video saying, "My son's blood is not for sale."

In a decision issued by Sohrab Shafa'i, the Head of the First Branch of the Military Prosecutor's Office in Saqqez and Baneh, it was stated that "it is established that Mahmudi was killed by Special Forces officers," but since it was unclear which officer was the shooter, it was decided not to prosecute the case and only an order was issued for the payment of blood money by "Faraja."⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Radio Zamaneh, April 24, 2023. <https://www.radiozamaneh.com/762007>; Radio Farda, August 14, 2023, <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-saqez-fereydoonmahmoudi/32547066.html>

3. Mehdi Babrnejad⁷⁷



Mehdi Babranjad was 22 years old when he was shot in the back with a Kalashnikov during protests in Quchan on September 21, 2022, and died after being taken to the hospital. In the legal case regarding Mehdi Babrnejad's death, the military tribunal in Mashhad held security officers responsible for his murder; however, no one was identified as the killer, and his brother was arrested for seeking justice.

Mehdi Babrnejad's family filed a lawsuit in the Khorasan Razavi Court regarding the murder of their son. Reza Babrnejad, Mehdi's brother, was arrested twice by security forces on May 21, 2024 and June 6, 2024 for seeking justice for his brother's death. He was later released from prison after posting bail.

According to a court document held by ABC, the First Branch of the Military Court of Khorasan Razavi issued a decision on September 18, 2023 labeling Babrnejad a "rioter." The court considered actions such as "being present at the scene," "throwing stones," "inciting rioters," "recording," and "being in the area when a police trailer was set on fire" as conditions justifying the use of firearms to disperse the rioters. On this basis, the court considered the shooting by the police and Basij forces present at the scene to be in accordance with the Law on the Use of Firearms (Articles 2, 4, 7, and 8) and acquitted the military forces.

However, the court acknowledged that "the forces used firearms to control the riots and, with the prior coordination of the Basij and IRGC forces present at the scene, pursued and arrested several rioters, resulting in the deaths of a number of them, including Mehdi Babrnejad, son of Samad."

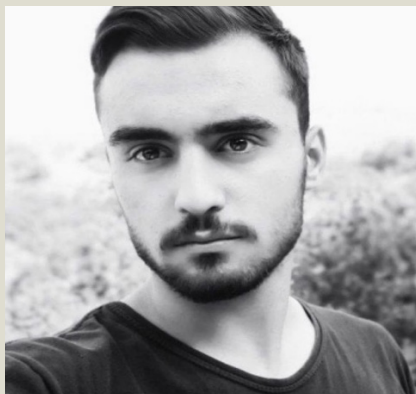
While confirming the killing of Babrnejad by military personnel, the court ruled that the family was not entitled to blood money and placed the blame on Babrnejad himself.

After the Babrnejad family appealed, the case was sent to the Court of Appeals for retrial. On April 29, 2024, Judge Reza Chiti Fadafan, head of the First Branch of the Khorasan Razavi Court of Appeals, issued the final verdict. Citing Article 13 of the Law on the Use of Firearms in Necessary Situations and Articles 479 and 482 of the Islamic Penal Code (2013), the court ordered the Khorasan Razavi Law Enforcement Command and Imam Reza IRGC to pay 30% of the total blood money to the plaintiff in two annual installments. Throughout the judicial process, from the initial trial to the final verdict, the court

⁷⁷ For more information on Mehdi Babrnejad's case, see his Omid Memorial case on Abdorrahman Boroumand Center website, <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/-8935/mehdi-babrnejad>

did not identify which specific official or institution was directly responsible for Babrnejad's death. In its final decision, the Court of Appeals merely acknowledged that he was "probably" killed by "one of the armed forces present at the scene," belonging to either the police or the IRGC.⁷⁸

4. Omid Mo'ayedi



Omid Mo'ayedi was 20 years old when he was shot with a pellet gun by security forces on Ma'ali Abad Boulevard in Shiraz on November 15, 2022. He died after being taken to Namazi Hospital in Shiraz. In the legal case, the Military Prosecutor of Fars Province deemed it "probable" that Mr. Mo'ayedi was killed by security forces. However, without identifying or prosecuting the shooter, the court suggested that blood money be offered to the victim's family.

The family filed a lawsuit in Shiraz court against the security and military officials responsible for their son's death.

On March 18, 2023, Mohsen Nuh Pisheh, the investigator of the Fourth Branch of the Military Prosecutor's Office of Fars Province, issued a decision stating that "although the possibility exists that the military or security forces had a reason to fire, because civilians were also armed with pellet guns," it was not possible to identify the shooter. Based on this reasoning, the court issued an acquittal for the security forces and suggested that blood money be paid to Mo'ayedi's family from public funds.⁷⁹

In the sixteen cases reviewed in this report, almost all the grieving families were subjected to threats, harassment, and legal persecution. In five cases, the families or their lawyers were arrested or sentenced to imprisonment and flogging after filing complaints. In four cases, families were offered money to withdraw their complaints. In another four cases, the authorities accepted responsibility for the actions of the armed forces but did not identify the perpetrators and only offered blood money to the families. In four additional cases, the complaints did not lead to any prosecution. Whether or not the authorities investigated the cases is not known. In one case (Kian Pirfalak), the victim was registered as a victim of violence by demonstrators.

⁷⁸ Available in Abdorrahman Boroumand Center Archive

⁷⁹ Available in Abdorrahman Boroumand Center Archive

In two cases, the complaints led to convictions. Five members of the armed forces were identified as the agents responsible for the killing of two protesters, arrested, and prosecuted. Two of them were sentenced to death, and three to prison, in trials held behind closed doors. These prosecutions lacked the necessary transparency, though some accounts of the trials by the victims' families and their lawyers were published in the domestic media. The judgments have not been published as required by Article 14 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Iran has ratified.⁸⁰ These cases, which are still awaiting the Supreme Court's ruling, may be Iran's response to the international community's firm stance against state violence during the 2022 protests and the establishment of the FFMI.



Tehran, September 20, 2022. The sign of Hejab St. is changed to Hejabless

These 16 complaint cases have shed some light on the role of the state's armed forces in the deaths of protesters. The investigation of these cases strongly contradicts the official narratives and the conclusions of the Special Committee's investigation, which attributed the deaths of protesters to "armed terrorists" and assigned no responsibility to the armed forces present in the streets.

⁸⁰ Article 14 (1) of the ICCPR states that 'any judgment rendered in a criminal case or in a suit at law shall be made public except where the interest of juvenile persons otherwise requires or the proceedings concern matrimonial disputes or the guardianship of children'.

IV - Conclusion



School girls in Tehran on October 2, 2022

Two years have passed since the “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests, yet justice for the victims remains elusive. Survivors and families of victims have lost trust in the judicial system, perceiving it as ineffective and hazardous. Consequently, most have refrained from seeking justice through official channels.

For the few families of victims who pursued legal action, authorities of the Islamic Republic have largely sought to dissuade them. In response to their persistence, officials have employed various tactics, including threats, offers of blood money, stalling legal proceedings, and accusing families of security-related crimes. Additionally, the authorities have mostly avoided conducting independent, impartial, and transparent investigations; instead, they have concealed evidence to shield those responsible for ordering and committing the killings of protesters.

The prosecution of state agents for their unlawful use of lethal force in two cases without independent verification of facts, public disclosure of the truth, apologies and acceptance of responsibility, is not an effective remedy for victims nor a step to guarantee non-repetition. The imposition of the death penalty is against international human rights standards. In addition, Iran has not provided all victims equal and effective access to justice and remedies, nor implemented changes in relevant laws and practices to prevent unlawful killings.⁸¹

81 “The Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Gross Human Rights Violations A Practitioners’ Guide,” International Commission of Jurists, 2018. <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Universal-Right-to-a-Remedy-Publications-Reports-Practitioners-Guides-2018-ENG.pdf>; See also, Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/basic-principles-and-guidelines-right-remedy-and-reparation>

Nevertheless, these cases have revealed critical facts that contradict the Iranian government's findings and align with the conclusions of the UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, which the regime has dismissed as lacking legitimacy and credibility.

The right to life and protection from arbitrary deprivation of life is a non-derogable right. Investigating potential unlawful deaths is vital to safeguarding this right, ensuring accountability, and providing redress when violated.⁸² A failure to investigate constitutes a violation of the right to life. Police investigations and trials by the judiciary are essential to prevent further abuses, uphold justice, and promote the rule of law.

The Islamic Republic's political and legal apparatus, such as the Council of Guardians, the revolutionary courts and the Revolutionary Guards, were conceived to consolidate power in the hands of the unelected and unaccountable Supreme Leader. The structure is designed to preserve the theocracy and suppress dissent, with the opaque and politicized judiciary, resulting in systemic impunity for state crimes.⁸³

The January 13, 2022, report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran identified significant structural barriers to accountability, including the judiciary's lack of independence:

"Although the Constitution designates the judiciary as an independent branch, in practice, it remains under the control of the Supreme Leader, as all powers of the state operate under his authority. The Head of the Judiciary, appointed by the Supreme Leader, has authority over the selection of all judges, and strict ideological criteria ensure judges align with state ideology, excluding women and dissenting voices.

Revolutionary courts, initially established after the 1979 revolution to handle cases against political dissidents, have continued to operate outside constitutional boundaries. They conduct closed-door trials for political activists, journalists, and human rights defenders, with judgments often influenced by intelligence agencies."⁸⁴

The report has stressed that Iran's governance system leaves "citizens with few protections against state power, including abuses by security and intelligence agencies."

International standards require that the members of states' investigative bodies, such as the ones created in the aftermath of the protests in Iran, be selected on the basis of their impartiality, competence and personal integrity. In order to ensure the safety of witnesses and complainants, the members should also be independent of any institution, agency or individual involved in the investigation.⁸⁵

82 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6: right to life. Human Rights Committee, General comment No. 36, 3 September 2019. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/GCArticle6/GCArticle6_EN.pdf

83 Iran Judges: a Selection Process that Ensures Injustice, December 15, 2015. www.iranrights.org/newsletter/issue/69

84 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman, 13 Jan 2022 <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g22/005/44/pdf/g2200544.pdf>

85 Article 11 "Principles on Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extrajudicial, Arbitrary, and Summary Executions" approved by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

The Special Committee established by President Raisi, which absolved the Morality Police and other security forces of responsibility for Amini's death and the killing of protesters, lacked independence and transparency. Its report was not made public, nor were its investigations subjected to public scrutiny. By denying plaintiffs access to CCTV footage identifying the perpetrators, the committee concealed the truth and denied victims the right to truth about what happened to their loved ones.

The FFMI stated in its March 2024 report that:

"mechanisms and procedures for investigating potentially unlawful deaths and torture, rape and ill-treatment are either lacking or are not consistent with international human rights law and standards. The Mission found no evidence of formal administrative or legal accountability mechanisms within security or intelligence forces, including the IRGC, Basij and FARAJA. While the Iranian authorities have announced a number of investigations, the Mission found that they did not meet the international human rights standards applicable to domestic investigations."⁸⁶

Further, the FFMI found no evidence of effective domestic remedies for victims of human rights violations and concluded that the authorities had deliberately and systematically obstructed all efforts by victims and their families to uncover the truth and seek justice. These patterns have been observed in previous protests as well.

For instance, after the 1999 security forces' attack on Tehran University dormitories, the Supreme National Security Council announced an investigation but failed to punish those who ordered or carried out the attack and handed over the continuation of the investigation to the Intelligence Ministry.⁸⁷ Similarly, during the November 2019 protests, then-President Hassan Rouhani's committee, composed of the Ministers of Interior and Justice and the President's Legal Deputy and tasked to address citizens' grievances, again lacked independence and transparency, yielding no meaningful outcomes.⁸⁸

Past efforts by victims' families to seek justice highlight systemic obstacles. In 2009, the deaths of four protesters detained in the notorious Kahrizak Detention Center⁸⁹ led to the facility's closure and the sentencing of the Tehran Prosecutor to two years imprisonment and his deputy to 15 years imprisonment,⁹⁰ eight years after the incident. However, this outcome was due to pressure from an influential insider, whose son⁹¹ died in detention, and international scrutiny.⁹² The lawsuits filed by

86 Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran," page 451, Independent Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, United Nations, 19 March 2024. <https://www.iranrights.org/library/document/4144>

87 Revisiting the Events of July 9, 1999, as narrated by the Supreme National Security Council <https://www.iranrights.org/fa/library/document/3916>

88 Iran Presidential Website, December 3, 2019, <https://president.ir/fa/112642>

89 The Indictment of the Accused in the Torture and Killing at Kahrizak Prison, <https://www.iranrights.org/library/document/2047/kahrizak-indictment>

90 Sharq Network, "Kahrizak Has Been Shut Down," May 22, 2018 <https://www.sharghdaily.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-3/738038-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA>

91 Mohsen Ruholamini's Omid Memorial case on the Boroumand Center website. <https://www.iranrights.org/memorial/story/61802/mohsen-ruholamini>

92 Sharq Network, "Kahrizak Has Been Shut Down," May 22, 2018 <https://www.sharghdaily.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-3/738038-%D8%B4%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA>

students injured in the security forces' attack on the dormitories ultimately led to the acquittal of the police commander and those under his command, except for a single soldier who was convicted for stealing an electric razor.⁹³

Under these circumstances, the international community must support survivors and victims' families and provide avenues for justice outside Iran. The FFMI made a number of recommendations on justice and reparation for victims and their protection and called for an increase in international cooperation to hold Iranian officials accountable for their crimes:

- "Member States must prioritize the expediting of asylum applications for victims of the protests and provide necessary funding for psychological support programs for victims of gender-based crimes and injured protesters. They should also prioritize the protection of Iranians abroad who may be at risk of retaliation and establish mechanisms to ensure accountability. It is also essential to address methods of compensation for victims."
- Regarding legal accountability and the struggle against impunity, the principle of universal jurisdiction should be applied to serious crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, torture and enforced disappearances. Consideration should also be given to preventing the application of immunity "ratione materiae"⁹⁴ for these crimes and to establishing a reparations fund for victims. It is essential to ensure that the rights of victims are respected at all stages of the judicial process, including the right to protection, reparation and due process.
- In the area of international engagement, countries that are signatories to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) should engage in negotiations with Iran to ensure that it complies with its obligations. It is also essential to review membership of the Ljubljana-Hague Convention and to strengthen international legal cooperation, in particular through the establishment of joint investigation teams in cooperation with the European Union.
- Finally, the UN Human Rights Council should continue to focus on the human rights situation in Iran, especially following the outcome of the fact-finding mission. Human rights mechanisms, such as special procedures and treaty bodies, must ensure that the findings of the [fact-finding mission] are followed up and implemented.⁹⁵

Public dissatisfaction with the Islamic Republic has sparked widespread protests, which have been met with increasingly violent repression. The government's response to the "Woman, Life, Freedom"

93 Accountability for the July 9, 1999 attack of the Tehran University dormitory. <https://www.iranrights.org/library/document/619/aquittal-for-law-enforcement-officers-charged-with-1999-university-dormitory-attack>

94 The term "ratione materiae" is a Latin legal term that refers to "subject matter jurisdiction". This term refers to the ability and authority of a court or judicial body to consider and decide a particular case based on the nature of the subject matter involved. Ratione materiae addresses the question of whether a court or tribunal has jurisdiction over certain issues, such as criminal law, civil law, international law, or human rights violations. One of the key discussions in the current debate on the immunity of government officials from foreign jurisdiction is the issue of access to subject matter immunity (immunity ratione materiae) for international crimes. Subject matter immunity protects an individual for official acts performed on behalf of his or her government. However, international crimes, due to their gravity and widespread impact, are typically committed in a formal context, i.e., usually with the express or implied authorization of the state. This, in turn, suggests that a government official who commits such crimes would generally enjoy subject matter immunity, except in rare circumstances where the crime was committed entirely in a personal and private capacity. However, this assumption has been severely challenged since the Pinochet case in the UK, where the House of Lords ruled that the former Chilean leader did not enjoy immunity for the crime of torture.

95 Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, March 19, 2024.

protests, along with its treatment of victims who dare fighting for justice, underscores its deep-seated disregard for citizens' rights and lives. The political and legal structures of the Islamic Republic obstruct meaningful reform, leaving Iranians with little recourse other than protests to voice their grievances and demand change. Under such conditions, further protests in Iran are inevitable. In the absence of accountability, the regime will continue responding with lethal force.

The existing domestic legal framework has directly contributed to the ongoing crisis of impunity and the . It is imperative for the international community to maintain its focus on the Islamic Republic and press its authorities to address the structural barriers to accountability and political participation. Additionally, the international community should collaborate with the Independent Fact-Finding Mission to secure justice and reparations for victims outside Iran. To break the cycle of violence, it must send an unequivocal message to Iranian authorities: impunity for the repression of protesters will no longer be tolerated.



“Where in the law does it say that the mother of a victim should be imprisoned for seeking justice for her child while the murderer walks freely in the streets?”

