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In the Shadow of War and Repression: A Message from Qarchak Prison

Statement



Open Letter from Golrokh Iraee, Reihaneh Ansari, and Verisheh Moradi from Qarchak Prison: The Struggle Carries On

We do not consider our suffering today to be greater than what has been imposed on the people of Iran. On Monday, June 23, while over three thousand people were confined behind closed doors in various sections of Evin Prison, Israeli rockets struck the prison compound and its buildings. Besides the casualties, there is still no news yet about some detainees who were held in solitary confinement cells. On Tuesday morning, women from Evin were transferred to Qarchak and Varamin prisons under severe security restrictions, and about three thousand men from Evin were also transferred to Greater Tehran Prison. Although we are in worse conditions than before our transfer, we declare, alongside our comrades and brothers in Greater Tehran Prison who have been attacked and pressured at the same time as us, that the current situation will not hinder our struggle. Because we know this path has never been free of hardship.

Since the Constitutional Revolution up to the present, despite numerous wars, anti-people coups, the massacre of defenseless people and political dissidents by authoritarian regimes over the past century, and the many ups and downs that history bears witness to, the path of struggle still continues. Today, we are in Qarchak Prison, facing conditions that more than a thousand women with various charges have endured and lived through for years. Women from the margins, bearing sufferings etched in the depths of their eyes, testimonies to the cycles of injustice that we have joined the struggle to break. They are the castaways at the edge of society, with no place in any equation of life, no presence in the news or media, and no mention in human rights reports. Their names, stories, and pain remain unseen and unheard.

What has astonished us in recent days is the truth of these women's lives. Women bent over short beds the size of graves, longing for basic living and hygiene facilities. Amid filthy, crusted walls bearing the grime of years of hardship, many of them, without a single rial to their name, offer themselves to their cellmates just for cigarette money. For exploitation. For sexual exploitation. And they submit to every form of humiliation. To fill their stomachs. And to obtain the minimum of what they have longed for. They work in the prison's labor section and work tirelessly daily (from carrying food and garbage to cleaning rest areas and dealing with prison guards), without receiving any wages, just for a few minutes more of phone calls. In the prison workshop, they are busy with sewing and stitching to get a pack of cigarettes at the end of the day. These are the women we, as political prisoners, are usually separated from, unless the authorities deliberately place us together as a form of punishment or exile. And now, although we have been accommodated in Qarchak Prison separately from them, our misfortunes are not separate from theirs.

Alongside the tireless struggles of the people against dictatorship, with clear goals and a firm course of action, we will continue on the path of resistance until the overthrow and eradication of all forms of tyranny. And alongside these forgotten ones who have been cast out of the cycle of life, we renew our resistance with greater determination than before. And to those who raise their voices for us and our difficult circumstances, we say in an even louder voice: what has been imposed on us today is not greater than the years of suffering these women have endured. So strive to improve the conditions of "us", regardless of the charges against us, and to improve the conditions of "us" who have been transferred to Qarchak and Greater Tehran prisons, regardless of our gender. And know that those who have gone missing beneath the rubble caused by the attack, and those who have been cast out by the ruthless cycle of life, need more help than us.

May we be a link in the chain of the Iranian people's struggle for equality and freedom, a people who have endured over a century of tyranny and exploitation and continue to move forward.

June 2025

Who the authors are

Golrokh Iraee human rights activist, imprisoned on several occasions since 2017 for her unpublished story against the stoning of women. Sentenced to six years in 2017. During mass arrests for protests against the killing of Mahsa Amini while in the hands of the police, she was imprisoned again on 26.9.2022.

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<https://www.amnesty.it/iran-sei-anni-di-carcere-per-aver-scritto-un-racconto-sulla-lapidazione/>

<https://www.en-hrana.org/golrokh-irae-sentenced-to-seven-years-in-prison-and-additional-punishments/>

<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202304139090>

Reihaneh Ansari labour rights activist sentenced to four years in 2023 for “meetings and collusion against national security and actions against national security”.

<https://www.en-hrana.org/workers-rights-activist-reyhaneh-ansari-receives-four-year-prison-sentence-and-additional-restrictions/>

<https://imhojournal.org/articles/the-trial-of-reyhaneh-ansari-nejad-will-be-held-on-july-17-2023/>

<https://wncri.org/2023/11/06/reyhaneh-ansarinejad-jailed/>

<https://wncri.org/2024/12/10/international-human-rights-day/>

<https://observatoiresituationniste.com/2025/06/23/lettre-de-prison-iran/>

Verisheh Moradi, Kurdish activist, militant of the “Society of Free Women of Eastern Kurdistan” (KJAR), in 2014 took part in the armed struggle against Isis in Rojava, sentenced to death in November 2024 for “armed rebellion against the state”.

<https://www.amnesty.it/appelli/iran-dissidente-curda-condannata-a-morte/>

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(notes and sites by the Centre for Documentation against War)