

# IRAN'S YOUTH RISKING ALL FOR "BETTER" LIFE IN THE FACE OF ANGUISH

In solidarity with Iran's young generation  
on International Youth Day

August 12 marks International Youth Day which centers on "Safe Spaces for Youth." It reminds the world that youth need safe spaces where they can come together, engage in activities related to their diverse needs and interests, participate in decision making processes and freely express themselves.





## Iran's youth risking all for "better" life in the face of anguish

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### **Introduction**

August 12 marks International Youth Day which centers on "Safe Spaces for Youth."

It reminds the world that youth need safe spaces where they can come together, engage in activities related to their diverse needs and interests, participate in decision making processes and freely express themselves.

For the Iranian youth, however, every safe space for effectively contributing to development has been eliminated by the Iranian regime through suppression of freedom of speech and the press, crackdown on peaceful protests, and plunder of the public's wealth.

Unemployment is the most devastating problem facing Iran's youth. Sixty percent of the Iranian population is under 30.

The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) reports the national rate of unemployment at 12.1 percent in the last Iranian year (ending March 20, 2017). The unemployment rate for the 15-29 age range was 25.3 percent. Many analysts believe the actual unemployment rates in Iran are much higher than what is reported by the SCI.

In a recent study, one-third of 16-25 youths said they would leave the country, if given the opportunity. With the flight of [180,000 elites per year](#), Iran's "brain drain" ranks first in the world.

The National Elite Foundation of Iran announced that 308 Olympiad holders and 350 of the top national analysts had emigrated in 2003-2007. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also declared that there are more than 250,000 Iranian engineers and physicians presently in the United States.

Those who stay in the country struggle with poverty. More than 50% of Iran's educated are unemployed while the rest are employed in menial jobs such as construction workers, street peddlers, repairmen, etc. which are not compatible with their professional training and studies.

Unable to cope with the crippling financial pressure, while the majority of Iranians, [at least 50 million](#), live in poverty, thousands of the youth have to [work as porters](#) to earn a living. transfer goods such as fuel, cigarettes, electric equipment, clothing, tires, etc. with great difficulty and at a high risk to their lives

More than 68,000 porters are working in Iran's border provinces. Unofficial sources however estimate the actual number of porters to be around 350 to 500 thousand in border provinces. They are constantly threatened by direct shooting of the regime's security forces.

Under such hopeless circumstances, the number of people suffering from drug addiction has more than doubled since 2011, according to a survey by a drug monitoring group.

The majority of Iran's [drug users](#) – estimated at least 14 million-- are young men and women. The average age of addiction in Iran has dropped to 13, according to reports published by state media.

Regrettably, the Iranian regime has no short or long-term plans to contain the unbridled spread of addiction especially among the young populace.

The youth and activists who work to improve the grim situation or dare to speak out against it, are arrested and imprisoned. Every peaceful activism is repressed and criminalized as well by the authorities.

It is not unreasonable to hear the youth chanting during the recent protests, "Neither Gaza nor Lebanon, my life for Iran."

This slogan is rooted in the depths of the reality of Iranian society where people's wealth has been plundered and poured into Syria, Yemen, the Lebanese Hezbollah and ...

Iranian youth are demanding to know why Iran has spent billions of dollars on foreign policy in the Middle East at a time when people are struggling at home?

## Imprisoned human rights activists, political prisoners and prisoners of conscience

The Iranian authorities routinely conduct campaigns of harassment and imprisonment against those who dare to stand up for people's rights and exercise their right to freedom of speech. Dozens of young people including human rights advocates, civil and political activists and even ordinary youths are being demonized, prosecuted and jailed on vague "national security" charges.

Many have been in prison for demanding their very basic rights or expressing their opinions.

Some young activists have been sentenced to more than 10 years behind bars for simple acts such as being in contact with the UN, EU or human rights organizations including Amnesty International. Charges that are commonly raised against these young prisoners are include, assembly and collusion against national security, seeking membership in opposition groups, spreading propaganda against the establishment, insulting the Supreme Leader (Ali Khamenei), and blasphemy.

Such activists are most often convicted after unfair trials before Revolutionary Courts and behind closed doors.



Arash Sadeghi



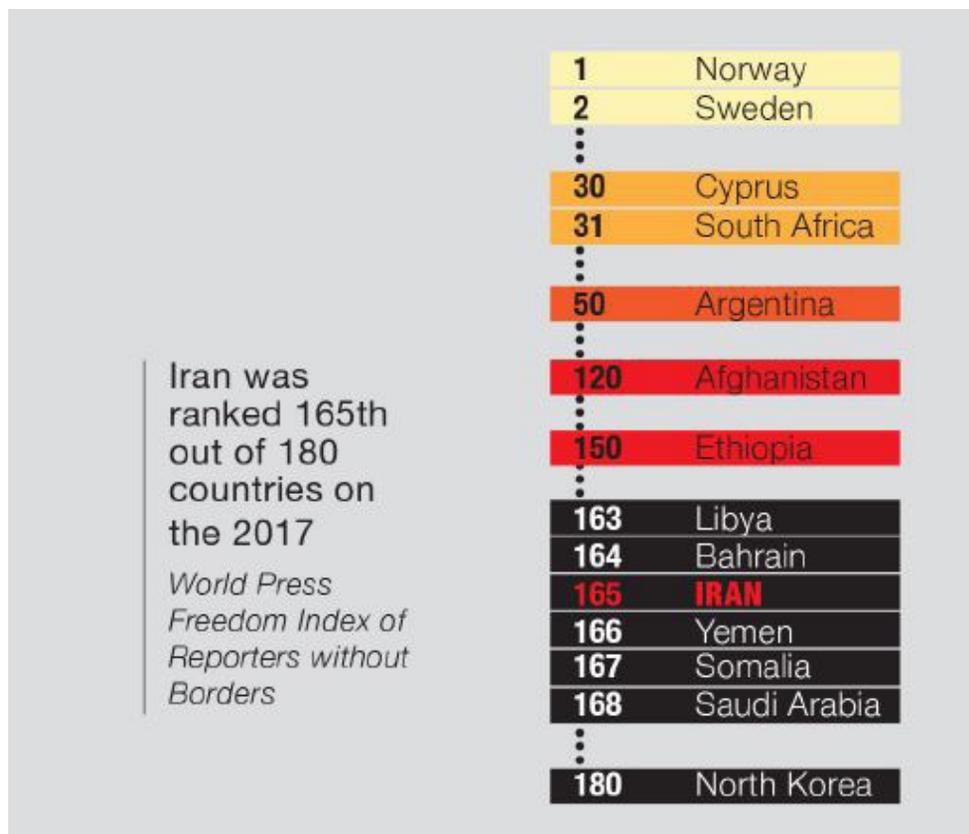
Saeid Shirzad



Golrokh Iraei



Majid Asadi



**Arash Sadeghi 38:** has been serving a 19-year sentence since 2016 solely for his peaceful human rights work. He has been repeatedly denied medical treatment despite his fragile physical health caused by torture in prison.

**Saeid Shirzad, 29:** a children's rights activist has been serving a 19-year sentence for his peaceful activities. He is suffering from lumbar disc disease and severe spastic inflammation in the lower back of the lumbar area, but has been deprived of medical access.

**Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraei, 38:** began serving a six-year prison sentence in October 2016 for the charges of "insulting the sacred" and "propaganda against the state," primarily for writing an unpublished story about the practice of stoning.

**Atena Daemi, 29:** has been in prison since November 2016 serving a seven-year prison sentence, reduced from an original 14-year sentence. She was convicted, following an unfair trial, on trumped-up national security-related charges arising solely from her peaceful human rights activities.

**Soheil Arabi, 30:** has been serving a seven-and-a-half-year prison sentence since 2013 for criticizing the Islamic Republic on Facebook. He has recently been slapped with additional six years after being convicted of fresh fabricate charges.

**Majid Assadi, 34:** has been serving a 13-year sentence on charges of supporting the opposition group People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, PMOI. Assadi previously served another four-year prison term from 2011 to 2015 for attending a ceremony commemorating the victims of the 1999 student protests in Tehran.

**Payam Shakiba, 30:** a political science graduate student at Tehran's Allameh Tabataba'i University, was arrested by the Intelligence Ministry in late February 2017. He has not had access to a lawyer and no reasons have been provided by the authorities for his arrest. On July 8, 2008, Shakiba was arrested along with four other students for exposing one of the deputy chancellors of Zanjan University for trying to take sexual advantage of a female student.

**Ebrahim Firouzi, 30:** a Christian convert who has been serving a five-year sentence on religious grounds.

**Saber Malek Raisi, 25:** has been imprisoned for the last nine years solely because of his brother's alleged links with a terrorist organization.



Soheil Arabi



Payam Shakiba



Atena Daemi



Ebrahim Firouzi



Mohammad Saber Malek Raisi

## Youths arrested in Iran protests

As anger over Iran's economic policies prevails, particularly among the young generation, tens of thousands of protesters have held anti-government rallies beginning since December 2017. The regime resorts to violence and widespread arrests to quell the protests.

At [least 8,000 arrested](#) between December 28, 2017, when the protests began in the city of Mashhad, and first week of January.

According to a classified report obtained from inside the regime, 35% of those arrested during the December/January uprising were students. Earlier, IRGC brigadier Hossein Zolfaghari, security deputy Minister of Interior, announced that more than 90% of the detainees are juveniles and teenagers with an average age of under 25.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Sadeghi, a member of the Committee on Education and Research of the Majlis, reported that 90 university students had been arrested, and said, "there is no accurate information on the number of detainees and that the number of detainees may be higher."

Dozens of the university students who joined the December/January protests, are now being sentenced to prison terms, and their sentences are being upheld by Iran's Appeals Courts.

- Zaniar Ahmadi, Student of Accounting at Azad University of Tehran who was detained during the protests earlier this year have been sentenced to eight years in prison by the Tehran's Revolutionary Courts.

- Sisters Shima Entesari and Sima Entesari, members of Iran's Gonadabi Dervish minority to five years in prison each for participating in an anti-government protest in February. They were found guilty of "assembly and collusion against national security" by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in early July 2018.

- Mehdi Eskandari, Law student of Tehran University was sentenced to 6 years behind bars and 2 years ban on leaving the country for participating in Iran's December 2018 protests.

Reza Bawi, student of Clinical Psychology, Roudhen Azad University, was sentenced to seven years behind bars for participating in Iran's December 2018 protests.

- A preliminary court has sentenced Tehran University student Pedram Pazireh to 7 years in prison and 74 lashes for participating in Iran's December 2018 protests.

- Leila Hosseinzadeh, a student of anthropology at Tehran University, was sentenced to six years' imprisonment and prohibited from leaving Iran for two years for participating in Iran's December 2018 protests.

- Mohsen Haghshenas, a Tehran University theater student, was sentenced to two years' incarceration.

- Khashayar Dehghan a Ph.D. student of Tehran University was sentenced to 7 years in prison, 74 lashes and two years of exile to a remote city.

- In June 2018, Sina Darvish Omran and Ali Mozaffari were convicted of the charges of acting against "national security" and waging "propaganda against the state" and sentenced to eight years in prison each for the charge of "assembly and collusion against national security."

- [Roya Saghiri, 24](#): On July 10 the Appeals Court in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province, upheld a two-year sentence against the student.

- a preliminary court also sentenced [Sadegh Gheysari](#), a journalist and student at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran, to seven years in prison, 74 lashes and a two-year ban on media activities and traveling abroad because he reported on a clash between Muslim Sufis and the police in Tehran in February 2018.

- Fereshteh Tousi, a sociology graduate student at Allameh Tabataba'i University [in Tehran], has been sentenced to a year-and-a-half in prison and banned from political and civil activists for two years.
- [Sepideh Farhan](#) a young woman who was arrested during Dec/Jan demonstrations in Tehran and was recently freed on bail, was sentenced to six years in prison. She was informed on July 7, 2018 that the Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court had sentenced her in absentia to six years in prison on June 24, 2018.
- Sina Rabi'i, a sociology student at Tehran University was sentenced to a one-year sentence and an additional two-year ban on leaving the country.
- Masoumeh Edalati, 23, was sentenced to six months behind bar. She has currently been held at Babol Prison, northern Iran.
- Ali Kamrani, a student of English Literature at Tabriz University was sentenced to six months in prison. Ali Ghadiri, University of Tabriz student was sentenced to six months in prison and one year suspended imprisonment.
- Rouhollah Mardani, student of Literature at Tehran University was sentenced to six years behind bars and a two-year ban on his social activities by Judge Abolqasem Salavati of Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court.
- Kasra Nouri, Law student of Tehran University has been sentenced to a twelve-year prison sentence, 74 lashes, two-year exile in a remote city and deprived of all social rights. The verdict was issued in absentia by the notorious judge, Mashallah Ahmadzadeh, the head of Branch 26, Tehran's Revolutionary Court.



## Fallen for freedom



At least 40 young men are among those killed during the nationwide uprisings in Iran. They were either shot dead, or were tortured to death after being arrested.

Most recently, the 26-year-old Reza Otadi was killed during an antigovernment demonstration in the city of Karaj on August 3, 2018.

Reza Otadi's only tweet a few days before he gets killed, reflects the legitimate demands of Iran's young protesters:

#IranRegimeChange

For freedom

For a better life

Peace

Economic & psychological security

Laughter without stress



R	Name	Surname	City	Age	Date of martyrdom
1	Hamzeh	Lashani Zand	Dorud, Lorestan	32	30-Dec-17
2	Mehdi	Kohzadi	Lorestan ,Dorud		30-Dec-17
3	Mohsen	Virayeshi	Lorestan ,Dorud	30	30-Dec-17
4	Hossein	Rashno	Lorestan ,Dorud		30-Dec-17
5	Mohammad	Choubak	Lorestan ,Dorud	29	30-Dec-17
6	Ehsan	Kheyri	Lorestan ,Dorud	26	30-Dec-17
7	Masoud	Kiani	Izeh, Khuzestan	15	31-Dec-17
8	Reza	Ghalekhanbaz	Tuyserkan, Hamedan		
9	Mohammad	Ebrahimi	Ghahdarijan, Isfahan		1-Jan-18
10	Hossein	Shafizadeh	Ghahdarijan, Isfahan		1-Jan-18
11	Shahab	Hosseini	Ghahdarijan, Isfahan		1-Jan-18
12	Nematullah	Shafiei	Ghahdarijan, Isfahan		1-Jan-18
13	Abdulrasul	Karimi	Ghahdarijan, Isfahan		1-Jan-18
14	Abbas	Karimi	Ghahdarijan, Isfahan		1-Jan-18
15	Ahmad	Heydari	Ghahdarijan, Isfahan	14	1-Jan-18
16	Mohsen	Adeli	Dezful, Khuzestan		3-Jan-18
17	Nematullah	Salehi	Juyaban, Isfahan		1-Jan-18
18	Vahid	Heydari	Arak, Markazi	22	6-Jan-18
19	Sina	Ghanbari	Shahre Rey, Tehran	23	7-Jan-18
20	Asghar	Haroun Rashidi	Homayoun Shahr, Isfahan	22	1-Jan-18
21	Alireza	Gomar	Masjed Soleyman, Khuzestan	31	
22	Arash	Khedri	Masjed Soleyman, Khuzestan		3-Jan-18
23	Amin	Ramezahi	Masjed Soleyman, Khuzestan		3-Jan-18
24	Saro	Ghahremani	Sanandaj, Kordestan	24	14-Jan-18
25	Ali	Pouladi	Chalous, Mazandaran	26	13-Jan-18
26	Kianoush	Zandi	Sanandaj, Kordestan	26	13-Jan-18
27	Shahab	Abtahi	Arak, Markazi	20	14-Jan-18
28	Hassan	Torkashvand	Karaj	23	
29	Mohammad	Nasiri	Zanjan		19-Jan-18
30	Ali	Momeni	Delfan, Lorestan		31-Dec-18
31	Arya	Rouzbehi	Ahvaz, Khuzestan	25	9-Jan-18
32	Ebrahim Seyed	Rasouli	Eghlid, Fars		28-Jan-18
33	Farzad	Chegeni	Dezful, Khuzestan		20-Jan-18
34	Amer	Fallahi	Homayoun Shahr, Isfahan	30	25-Jan-18
35	Taleb	Basativand	Ilam Prison		25-Feb-18
36	Omid	Yousefian	Fars ,Kazerun		16-May-18
37	Ali	Mohammadian Azad	Fars ,Kazerun		16-May-18
38	Hadi	Jahantab	Fars ,Kazerun		16-May-18
39	Reza	Azhdari	Fars ,Kazerun		16-May-18
40	Reza	Otadi	Alborz ,Gohardasht	26	3-Aug-18



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