



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

STATEMENT

Paris, November 10, 2022

The UIA-IROL is Gravely Concerned by the Arrest, Detention and Prosecution of Lawyers in Iran

The UIA-IROL has been following with the outmost concern the situation of lawyers in Iran in the context of the ongoing crackdown in response to nationwide protests. According to reports, not less than nineteen (19) lawyers have been arrested and detained while simply practicing law or legitimately exercising their rights. The UIA-IROL expresses its deep concern as the Rule of Law in Iran is severely threatened.

In the last weeks, the widespread protests demanding accountability and the end of violence and restraints of women and girls' rights, following the death of 22-year-old Jina Mahsa Amini¹, have been brutally repressed by security forces in Iran. The UIA-IROL is gravely concerned by reports indicating an alarming number of protesters being arbitrarily detained and killed - including children – as well as being subjected to gender-based and sexual violence, excessive use of force, torture, and enforced disappearances.

In line with its mission to defend the Rule of Law and the legal profession in particular, the UIA-IROL is gravely concerned about the situation of Iranian lawyers who have been arbitrarily arrested on the pretext of harming national security while they were while simply representing protesters. Most of these lawyers remain in detention.

According to the information received, at least nineteen lawyers have been arrested since late September 2022, while reports indicate that the actual number could be higher than twenty-seven. Among them are lawyers Mahsa Gholamalizadeh, Saeed Jalilian, Milad Panahipoor and Babak Paknia, who were arrested in late September and have been since reportedly released on bail. Lawyers Roza Etemadansari, Firouzeh Khordechi, Amir Deghani were among the lawyers arrested in early October.

On October 12, 2022, lawyers Mohammad Reza Faqihi, Saeed Sheikh, and an unidentified female lawyer were among dozens of individuals who were violently arrested outside the Iranian Bar Association while they were peacefully expressing solidarity with nationwide protests in Argentina Square in Tehran. Lawyer Amin Adel Ahmadian was arrested in Tehran at the end of October. On November 1, lawyers Nazanin Salari, Mahmud Taravat-Ruy and Bahar Sahraiyani were reportedly arrested in the south-central Iranian city of Shiraz, in Fars province.

We understand that some of the detained lawyers have been subjected to various forms of physical and psychological torture and other ill-treatment.

The UIA-IROL firmly condemns the detentions indicated above, as well as those of other legal practitioners in Iran. The UIA-IROL is deeply concerned about the continued and increasing detention and prosecution of lawyers in Iran.

¹ Widespread protests have sparked all over the country on September 16, following the death of 22-year-old Jina Mahsa Amini who died in a hospital in Tehran after being arrested by the morality police for wearing an “improper hijab”.

For years, Iranian independent lawyers have been paying a high price for practising their profession: [prior to August 30, 2022, at least five defense lawyers remained imprisoned in Iran](#), including Amirsalar Davoudi, designated recipient of the 2022 Ludovic Trarieux Human Rights Prize. Four others, including prominent lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh, were serving prison sentences imposed without due process and a fair trial.

In threatening lawyers simply for offering their legal services to protesters, many of whom are being denied their essential right to a legal defence, the Iranian authorities are violating international standards, including Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Iran has ratified, as well as the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers that direct every State to ensure effective access to legal representation through an independent Lawyer. In addition, the right to a fair trial is among the rights highlighted in Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The repression of lawyers is even more concerning as the Iranian authorities intensify their assault against detained protesters by indicting them on vague national security charges that may lead to harsh sentences, including death penalty sentences, following processes falling short of international standards. In Tehran Province alone, the Iranian authorities have recently announced the mass open trial of about 1,000 protesters in connection with their alleged participation in the protests, and indictments have been announced all across Iran. In light of a call on the Judiciary to issue death penalty sentences against protesters that has been issued by a majority of parliament members in Iran, a Judiciary spokesman recently confirmed that courts would deal firmly with protesters.

The UIA-IROL calls upon the Iranian Government to uphold its national and international obligations with regard to the Rule of Law, respecting fair trial guarantees, the right of due process, and the independence of the legal profession. **Respecting international standards and obligations in matters of justice is not optional under treaties protecting fundamental rights and freedoms.**

The UIA-IROL firmly believes that the damage that this kind of repression causes to the legal profession affects States and organizations worldwide, endangering the Rule of Law and generating greater insecurity on a global level. The UIA-IROL therefore urges the Iranian government to cease such illegitimate practices and ensure that legal professionals practicing in Iran will be able to do so without fear of threat or intimidation.

The UIA-IROL joins the numerous voices of the international legal community to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all Iranian lawyers that have been unjustly arrested and the withdrawal of any charges against them.

The UIA-IROL takes this opportunity to express its unconditional support to and solidarity with all Iranian lawyers who, despite the risks, continue to courageously and fully assume their core role in the defense of human rights and the Rule of Law in Iran.

More about UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the International Association of Lawyers (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

For more information go to: www.uianet.org - uiacentre@uianet.org