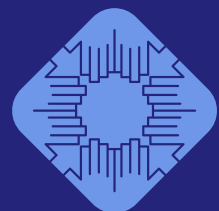


Labor Rights in Iran



QUARTERLY REPORT NO. 17

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Brief Introduction

This report is Zamaneh Media's 17th Labor Rights Quarterly Report. The reports consistently focus on unemployment, deferment or non-payment of wages and benefits, protests and strikes, freedom of association and assembly, independent unions, discrimination in the workplace, labor law issues, contractual violations, women's labor, child labor, and labor law. Zamaneh Media monitors the topics mentioned above daily, and this quarterly report presents the "big picture" of the most critical Iranian labor rights issues over the past three months.

The following report covers major labor rights issues, protests, and trends from April through June 2021. The information does not cover all labor-related events and topics.

In addition to the quarterly reports, Zamaneh Media also publishes special reports on specific labor topics and an annual report on May 1 (International Workers' Day) every year. For all previously published reports, please visit [Zamaneh Media's website](#).

Major Issues

The official inflation rate in April 2021 was close to 50%. The prices of most essential goods increased, more than reflected in the Statistical Center of Iran's reports. It is believed that Hassan Rouhani's outgoing cabinet will issue a permit to increase the price of dairy and bread after the outcome of the presidential election on June 18, 2021 is announced. Dairy prices have risen several times over the past year. Bread prices also rose between 15% and 35% last summer after shortages in many cities. Iranian domestic media field reports show that since the beginning of this Iranian calendar year, the price of foodstuffs has risen by approximately 50%.

As inflation rises, the number of unemployed persons continues to increase. Owners of production units have laid off more workers because of what they call "unprofitable production." Dismissals have plagued municipal service workers. At least 26 workers of the municipality of Malekan were laid off in March 2021. The owners of the Karun Cement Factory also fired at least ten workers. Eighty workers of Ahwaz Steel Factory also lost their jobs during the same period. The Mahshahr Pipeline fired 250 workers. Workers in the oil, gas, and petrochemical industries were also laid off en masse.

Iranian government agencies do not provide accurate statistics on the number of workers who have been unemployed since the beginning of the Iranian New Year (March 21, 2021). In April, however, during the fourth wave of Iran's coronavirus pandemic and the implementation of social distancing rules, the secretary-general of the Chamber of Trade Unions said that, as the pandemic worsened, three million people would be out of work.¹ The Deputy Minister of Labor announced on May 25 that two million people had lost their jobs since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.² Most people who have lost their jobs during the pandemic were employed in service jobs with or without a temporary contract and were, therefore, not eligible for unemployment insurance. According to the Iranian Social Security Organization, only 22% of workers who have lost their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic had permanent contracts.³

At the end of Iranian year 1399 (February 2021), the official number of unemployed persons was 2,478,000. The real unemployment rate, however, is higher than official reports. The Statistical Center of Iran counts as employed anyone who has worked as little as one hour during the week of the census, including trainees, soldiers, and unpaid employees.

The simultaneous growth of unemployment and inflation has increased the misery index in Iran. The workers and poor sections of society cannot continue to bear the current situation. In May, three workers set themselves on fire in front of the Kermanshah Road and Urban Development Authority to protest delayed payment of their wages.⁴ A miner in Sirjan also hanged himself.⁵ The suicide rate of workers and their families has been rising since last year.

Under such circumstances, the thirteenth presidential election was held on June 18, 2021. The Guardian Council allowed only seven candidates to participate. The campaigns of

1 [Radio Zamaneh](#), April 4, 2021

2 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 25, 2021

3 [Radio Zamaneh](#), January 3, 2021

4 [Radio Zamaneh](#), June 9, 2021

5 [Hrana](#), June 13, 2021

most candidates focused on banking facilities and cash subsidies, as well as "production support" and "deregulations." In recent years, the Supreme Leader has discussed the deregulation of the business environment in his annual messages. This year, in his Persian New Year (Nowruz) message, the Supreme Leader ordered all executive and legislative bodies to "remove the production hurdles."⁶ In recent years, the Iranian government has changed labor and social security laws to the detriment of workers by issuing directives to deregulate business. In the final days of the last Persian year (March 2021), the Vice President for Legal Affairs issued a circular to the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare recognizing a "mutually agreed wage."⁷ According to this policy, employers can avoid paying employees an end-of-year bonus based on their years of service. All the employers need to do is to settle on a new "mutually agreed wage" with the workers.

Members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament) have also put a plan entitled "Empowerment and Sustainability of Social Security" on the agenda. The program, like the Social Security Parametric Reform Plan, imposes a reduction in retirement pensions, an increase in the retirement age, and further restrictions to retirees.⁸

6 [Website of the Leader of the Islamic Republic](#), March 21, 2021

7 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 7, 2021

8 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 4, 2021

The Scourge of Deregulation on the Body of Retirees

The government has been trying for three years to change the social security laws to the detriment of the workers. It has done this under the pretext of "reducing the ratio of the insured to the pensioners." Social security retirees have been taking to the streets each week in a new round of protests that began in January 2021.

The demands of the retirees include:

- A raise in their retirement pay that is commensurate with the poverty line
- The provision of completely free health insurance
- Payment of the government's debts to the Social Security Administration
- The transfer of a portion of the shares of the Social Security Investment Company to the retirees



From last winter until May 2021, retirees gathered every week in various cities to protest poor living conditions, low wages, and the imposition of poverty.

The population of retirees and pensioners of the Social Security Organization is about 3.5 million. In 2019, 67% of retirees received an income of less than 1.9 million tomans per month. After the incomplete implementation of the wage adjustment plan last year, they began receiving about 2.8 million tomans. In March 2021, the CEO of the Social Security Organization announced that the minimum wage for married retirees with two children who have 30 years of insurance history, would be 4.2 million tomans. Retirees with less than 30 years of service, disabled workers, and survivors of workers who died from work-related accidents receive less than the minimum wage.⁹

The government has pledged in the budget law to pay 89 trillion tomans of the claims of the Social Security Organization in non-cash form. This payment is for the implementation of the second stage of the law on the adjustment of pensions. Retirees' union activists estimate that the government's debt to the Social Security Organization is between 320 and 350 trillion tomans.

9 [Eghtesad Online](#), April 3, 2021

The protests have not been limited to Social Security retirees. Retirees of the Steel Pension Fund, retirees of the Laleh Hotel, the Islamic Republic Airlines, and other companies have also protested their living conditions in the past three months. The table below shows some of these protests.

Group	Demands	Type
Social Security retirees ¹⁰	Wage adjustments, wage increases commensurate with the poverty line, completely free health insurance	Rallies in different cities
Retirees of Laleh Hotel ¹¹	Payment of delayed bonuses, wage increase	Gathering in front of the hotel
Shiraz Telecommunication Retirees ¹²	Payment of delayed bonuses, wage increase	Rally in Shiraz
Steel industry retirees ¹³	Wage adjustments, salary increase	Gatherings in Isfahan, Tehran, Ahvaz, Rudbar, and Ghaemshahr
Retirees of Iran Air ¹⁴	Payment of delayed wages	Rally in Tehran
Healthcare retirees ¹⁵	Wage adjustments	Gatherings in Tehran, Isfahan, Fars, and a few other provinces

Retirees took to the streets for several weeks in a row, demanding the full implementation of the Income Equalization Act and an increase in their retirement pay. The Income Equalization Act entails the rights of a pensioner with a low salary in their job group to increase, approaching the average wage of equal rank employees in that job group. Literacy and health workers also rallied in their workplaces or in front of government buildings to protest wage inequality, job insecurity, the use of temporary contracts, and inadequate pay.

10 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 9, 2021

11 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), May 18, 2021

12 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), May 23, 2021

13 [Kargar News](#), May 30, 2021

14 [Tin News](#), May 26, 2021

15 [Iranian Students News Agency](#), May 11, 2021

Deregulation Kills Workers

Between March 21 and June 10, 2021, 98 workers lost their lives and 153 were injured in workplace accidents. These accidents included: the collapse of the Tazreh coal mine¹⁶ and the burial of workers' bodies for several days; an accident in the Abgo village salt mine;¹⁷ the burning of six workers in a furniture workshop;¹⁸ a fire in Shokohiyeh industrial town in Qom and Nargostar of Isfahan,¹⁹ the collapse of the Nilchian mine in Ardal, the failure of the tunnel on the Tehran-North freeway;²⁰ and dozens of accidents in small and large production units, construction workshops, and urban and civil service workplaces.

As in previous months, workers in the construction, road, and well-drilling sectors suffered the most casualties from work accidents. Fatal accidents also occurred in small manufacturing and service workshops, fire stations, electricity operators, hospital services, and mines.

The table below shows work accidents by different sectors:

Workplace	Sector	Number of Injured	Number of Deaths
Large workshop	Industrial	67	8
Construction workshop	Construction	41	39
City services	City services	3	3
Public service	Healthcare	22	14
Small workshop	Industrial / Service	4	14
Mine	Mine	16	13
Agriculture	Agriculture	0	7
Total	-	153	98

The increase in work accidents in Iran is due to the failure of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare to monitor the safety of production and service workshops.

According to Article 95 of the Labor Law, the responsibility for implementing technical and occupational health and safety rules and regulations lies with the employer or the officials of the economic units.

Under the Labor Law, the General Inspection Office of the Ministry of Labor is responsible for inspecting workshops. The General Inspection Office, however, has reduced the number of inspections due to a supposed staffing shortage. In response to workplace accidents in the mines, the chairman of the Markazi Province Association of Safety and Health Officials said in April: "The lack of labor inspectors and the shortage of safety officials in the workshops are the factors that lead to accidents. Occupational safety experts could be present in workshops in the country. Still, this important issue is not institutionalized in the mines yet, meaning that there is no safety officer to oversee the employer's performance and the Ministry of Labor's oversight is not in place."²¹

16 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 5, 2021

17 [Occupational Health and Safety](#), May 25, 2021

18 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 9, 2021

19 [Occupational Health and Safety](#), May 25, 2021

20 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 23, 2021

21 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 9, 2021

The Ministry of Labor has delegated part of its responsibility for inspecting workshop units to the non-governmental sector and intends to continue this process. Hatam Shakarami, Deputy Minister of Labor, acknowledged the shortage of inspectors at the Ministry in April, saying that the ministry plans to use the capacity of private companies to inspect workshops.²²



A worker of Tazreh mine in Shahroud after an accident that killed two workers.

The government is willing to hand over workshop inspections to the private sector. At the same time, April 2021, several safety and health inspectors from the Ministry of Labor gathered in front of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament) building to protest their unemployment.

Fars News Agency wrote in April: “2300 people who worked in the workshops as technical consultants in charge of safety, health, and environment were dismissed due to the Deputy Minister of Labor Relations’ directive, which came into force on September 23, 2019, which does not allow the renewal of the licenses of these people.”²³

Article 85 of the Labor Law designates the High Council for Technical Protection as the decision-making body on technical and occupational health regulations. Another body, the Center for Research, Training, and Technical Protection and Occupational Health, as the executive arm of the High Council for Technical Protection, is responsible for issuing work permits, training, and setting inspection standards. In 2007, the Center for

22 [Iranian Students News Agency](#), May 2, 2021

23 [Fars News Agency](#), April 5, 2021

Research, Training, and Technical Protection and Occupational Health outsourced some of its responsibilities, such as conducting exams and training courses, to legal safety consultants to implement privatization policies. In 2019, the Ministry of Labor issued a directive restricting occupational safety and inspection services to 30 specific companies and requiring inspectors to cooperate with these companies.

The Iranian Ministry of Labor has officially hired only 1,200 inspectors. This number is small considering the number of production workshops. In May, Ali Mozaffari, Director-General of the Inspection Office of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, confirmed the low ratio of inspectors to production workshops and the working population, saying that the per capita Ministry of Labor inspectors are much lower than the standard.²⁴

24 [Mehr News Agency](#), May 24, 2021

Expulsion, Flogging, Imprisonment

The Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-Industry Company workers' victory came in May after three years of resistance to privatization. A Tehran court ruled in favor of the dismissal of Omid Asadbeigi and Mehrdad Rostami, the two owners of the factory. Workers celebrated the victory, but a few days after the vote, sabotage by the government and the previous owners halted production at the Haft-Tappeh sugar factory. The Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Workers' Union announced, on April 23, that Farzaneh Zilabi, the factory workers' lawyer, was summoned to court. The court of Shush suspended the lawyer's license.²⁵ Ali Nejati, a retired factory worker, originally sentenced to five years in prison but whose sentence was overturned in December 2020, was also summoned to jail to serve his sentence.

Inside the factory, company executives refused to pay the workers their salaries. Provincial officials also did not provide water for the company's sugarcane cultivation. According to labor activists in the city of Shush, the company's managers have not paid workers' salaries since the beginning of the new Persian year (March 2021), and the authorities reduced the company's water rights by half.²⁶ Workers gathered at the factory to protest the situation. On June 3, the workers' union reported that police had opened fire to disperse the protesting workers.²⁷

In Tehran, security forces detained Ismail Gerami, a labor activist and retired worker, at his home on April 4 to prevent a rally of retirees. The Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced Geramni to 5 years in prison, 74 lashes, and a fine of two million tomans.²⁸ In Tehran, Isfahan, Rasht, and Shiraz, security forces raided retirees' gatherings and temporarily detained several protesters.²⁹ Mahboubeh Farahzadi, a retired teacher and a board member of the Teachers' Union, was arrested for participating in retiree rallies in Karaj. She is currently out on bail.³⁰ On May 1, at least 30 participants in a Labor Day rally in Tehran and Kurdistan were arrested.³¹ All detainees were released on bail in the following days.

On May 16, in Kurdistan, Osman Ismaili and Mahmoud Salehi, two labor activists in the city of Saqqez, were summoned to the Revolutionary Court for questioning for participating in Labor Day ceremonies and publishing material on Labor Day. Upon conviction, the court issued bail for both men. Due to the refusal of both labor activists to accept the court's verdict, the judge of Branch 102 of the Saqqez Court sent them to prison. On May 27, a court sentenced Mahmoud Ismaili to three months in jail and Osman Ismaili to six months. On June 8, the court released Ismaili and Salehi on bail.³²

Javanmir Moradi, a labor activist and member of the Electricians' Union in Kermanshah, who was arrested and tried last year, was sentenced to one year in prison. The appeals

25 [Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Company Labor Syndicate](#), May 3, 2021

26 [Radio Zamaneh](#), June 2, 2021

27 [Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Company Labor Syndicate](#), June 3, 2021

28 [Retired Employees Council](#), June 10, 2021

29 [Radio Zamaneh](#), April 11, 2021

30 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), May 29, 2021

31 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 1, 2021

32 [Radio Zamaneh](#), June 8, 2021

court commuted his sentence to a fine.³³ Haidar Ghorbani, a construction worker and a member of the board of directors of the Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers, was sentenced by a Revolutionary Court to 11 years in prison.³⁴



Ismail Gerami, a retired union activist, was sentenced to prison and flogging. A group of teachers and social activists went to his house in solidarity with him.

On June 7, Maziar Seyednejad, a labor activist in Tehran, was arrested and transferred to prison. Seyednejad had previously been sentenced to three years in prison for participating in rallies by Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Company and Ahvaz Steel workers.³⁵

Hirad Pirbadaghi, a labor rights activist, was also arrested in Tehran and received a six-month prison sentence.³⁶

In Ahvaz, nine protesting workers of the District 2 Municipality who had rallied were arrested. Two workers, Davoodi and Mansouri, were detained until June 10.³⁷

Boroujerd police raided a gathering of Saman Tile workers in April and arrested several protesting workers.³⁸

33 [Hrana](#), May 26, 2021

34 [Radio Zamaneh](#), June 5, 2021

35 [Hrana](#), June 10, 2021

36 [Hrana](#), May 15, 2021

37 [Asr e Jonoob](#), June 4, 2021

38 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), April 29, 2021

In addition to directly suppressing and detaining protesting workers, employers threatened to fire workers inside production units. Managers at the General Directorate of Ports and Maritime Affairs in Khuzestan Province asked workers to pledge not to participate in the protests. They also prevented two workers' representatives from entering the workplace.³⁹In the Arvand Free Zone Organization, service workers in the Abadan and Khorramshahr industrial towns who protested wage arrears and went on strike were threatened with dismissal.⁴⁰ Gharib Havizavi and Hossein Rezaei, labor representatives for the Ahwaz National Steel Industrial Group, were also fired on March 30.⁴¹

39 [Iran Labor News Agency \(ILNA\)](#), April 21, 2021

40 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), May 15, 2021

41 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), June 12, 2021

Oil Workers: Discrimination and Exploitation

Iran's energy industry, especially oil, gas, and petrochemicals, must deal with sanctions, declining oil exports, and the withdrawal of international companies from the country. Domestic contracting companies that have implemented oil and gas development projects are unable to finance them. This situation has made things more difficult for workers who often work on short-term, temporary, and low-wage contracts. Since late March, at least 25 rallies by energy workers were registered in various places. The participants of most of these rallies, which sometimes lasted for several days, demanded the implementation of the job classification scheme, the elimination of wage discrimination, an increase in wages, and the conversion of employment arrangements from contractual to formal agreements.

In mid-June, protests by temporary contract workers in the energy sector spread. Workers at the Bidkhood Power Plant left the workplace to protest low wages and long hours. The workers' protests became more widespread in the following days and have continued.

The table below includes protests by workers in the oil, gas, and refinery sectors and since March 2021.

Place	Sector	Cause of Protest
Volume contract workers of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Production Co. ⁴²	Energy	Wage discrimination
Welders and workers of Behbahan Bidboland refinery ⁴³	Energy	The uncertain status of contracts, insufficient wages
Parsian Oil and Gas Transport workers ⁴⁴	Energy	Removal from the information system of workforce contractors and exclusion from the Job Classification Scheme
Workers of Lidoma Company in South Pars	Energy	Wage inequality, non-implementation of the Ranking Plan
Abadan refinery workers ⁴⁵	Energy	No wage increases, the uncertain status of contracts
Persepolis Petrochemical workers in South Pars ⁴⁶	Energy	No increase in salaries according to the labor law, the duration of leave
Contract workers of the National Iranian Drilling Company ⁴⁷	Energy	Dismissal of workers
Official workers of the Ministry of Petroleum ⁴⁸	Energy	No salary increases, the status of the pension fund's articles of association, non-payment of bonuses in full
Temporary oil workers in the Petrochemical Special Zone ⁴⁹	Energy	Failure to implement the Job Classification Plan, the unstable status of contractors
Contract workers of the Ministry of Petroleum	Energy	Lack of harmonization of salaries, the unstable status of contracts with contracting companies
Assaluyeh IGC workers	Energy	Insufficient wages

42 [Fanoos Zagros](#), April 7, 2021

43 [Iran Kargar](#), May 11, 2021

44 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), April 12, 2021

45 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), April 24, 2021

46 [Iranian Students News Agency](#), April 22, 2021

47 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), May 4, 2021

48 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 26, 2021

49 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), May 12, 2021

Persian Gulf Holding workers	Energy	Inadequate wages - workers are demanding a 25% pay increase
Temporary workers of the Ministry of Petroleum	Energy	The unclear status of contracts, insufficient wages

Asminon Miners: Resistance to Oppression

Working conditions for miners in Iran are dire. Since March 2021 alone, 13 miners have died in work-related accidents, and 16 others have been injured. The transfer of mines to the private sector and the lack of oversight by the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare on the protection and safety of work in mining units have increased the exploitation of miners. An example is the situation faced by the miners of the Asminon chromite mine in Manojan city in Kerman province. After the transfer of the mine to Faryab Mines, the miners faced more challenging conditions. The new owners temporarily closed the mine.



Miners of the Asminon chromite mine in Manojan, Kerman province

1,200 workers of the Asminon chromite mine in Manojan have been laid off in recent months. Miners took to the streets twice in February to protest a two-month delay in the payment of their wages and the firing of their co-workers. In March, miners blocked the Kahnooj-Bandar Abbas road again in protest after provincial officials failed to deliver their promises.

The workers' protest spread in April. They blocked the road between Hormozgan province to Kerman and Kerman to Sistan and Baluchistan for several days.

The workers' demands included:

- Returning to work
- Amendment of their employment contracts
- Elimination of the contracting company

- Implementation of the Job Classification Plan
- Payment of wages in arrears
- Dismissal of the private sector owner of the mine⁵⁰

The miners' protests ended temporarily on May 20 after the employer accepted parts of their demands.⁵¹

50 [Eghtesad 24](#), May 20, 2021

51 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 21, 2021

The Municipal Workers Are Hungry

The financial crisis in the municipalities has affected the municipal service workers. There is not a day that municipal workers do not gather in at least one city in Iran to protest non-payment of wages, delays in the payment of premiums, and the mistreatment of municipal officials and contractors. Between late March and early June, at least 30 protest rallies were reported by municipal workers. Like last year, the municipalities of Khuzestan were the focus of municipal workers protests. Municipal workers gathered in Khorramshahr, Kota Abdullah, Ahvaz, Omidiyeh, Arvandkenar, Weiss, Susangard, and Chavibdeh Abadan at least once in the last three months.

In Ahvaz, security forces arrested nine workers during a protest by District Two municipal workers who were protesting their poor living conditions and the delayed payment of their wages. Seven protesters were temporarily released, but two detained workers are still in custody at the time of writing (June 10).⁵²

In the transportation sector, railway maintenance workers and technicians continue to protest the use of temporary contracts, the continued operation of the contracting company, and delays in the payment of wages. Within the last three months, railway workers have gathered in Mazandaran,⁵³ Markazi, Lorestan, Zanjan,⁵⁴ and Tehran.

Other workers who protested delays and discrimination in the payment of wages include water and sewage contract workers in Khuzestan,⁵⁵ Parsabad, Ardabil, Gachsaran,⁵⁶ energy sector's contract workers in Tehran, and the west and across the country,⁵⁷ Urmia Telecommunication Company workers, and firefighters fired in Shahrekord.⁵⁸

52 [Asr Jonoob](#), June 4, 2021

53 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), April 24, 2021

54 [Telegram channel of railway maintenance workers](#), May 31, 2021

55 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), April 13, 2021

56 [Iran Kargar](#), May 18, 2021

57 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), May 9, 2021

58 [Hamshahri Online](#), April 11, 2021

Teachers

The school year in Iran is over. The closure of schools and the requirement for students and teachers to use the Shad Virtual Education Network, kept at least 210,000 students at home and out of schools.⁵⁹ The actual number of school dropouts is likely higher than the figures announced by the Deputy Minister of Primary Education.

According to government officials, at least 30% of students in disadvantaged and rural areas could not access the Shad network. Teachers in these areas, who often work under “service purchase” contracts, also had to travel long distances to get to work during the coronavirus pandemic. This group of low-paid teachers, who are often paid below the minimum wage approved by the High Council of Labor, must pay for travel and coronavirus protection and hygiene items out-of-pocket. Over the past year, “service purchase” teachers have been writing petitions and gathering in front of government buildings to demand formal employment in the education sector.⁶⁰



Teachers at non-profit schools, Article 28 teachers, literacy movement instructors, and kindergarten teachers gathered several times in front of government buildings in Tehran and multiple other cities, demanding official employment.

The coronavirus pandemic has also affected the livelihoods of non-profit schoolteachers. The founders and owners of non-profit schools, under the pretext of the pandemic, reduced the teachers’ working hours and paid them lower monthly salaries. Teachers at non-profit schools have rallied several times in various cities across Iran to protest their job and living conditions.

59 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), May 20, 2021

60 [Mallem Irani](#), April 7, 2021

The third group of protesting teachers consists of those who work according to Article 28 of the statute of Farhangian University. In recent years, the Ministry of Education has recruited university graduates on short-term temporary contracts to address the shortage of teachers.

Teachers in this group, who are not officially employed, receive a monthly salary equivalent to 2.8 million tomans (approx. 112 USD). In May, this group of teachers gathered several times before the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament) building. They want the government to implement the teacher ranking scheme, increase salaries, convert temporary contracts into formal ones, and enforce the equalization law.

The Islamic Consultative Assembly has announced that the Social Commission has approved the Teacher Ranking bill and will soon consider it in the Assembly's open court. In a statement, however, the Coordinating Council of Teachers' Trade Unions considered the decision of the Parliamentary Social Commission contrary to the actual demands of the teachers.⁶¹ The Teacher Ranking Plan was approved by the Sixth Development Plan but has not been implemented yet. In February 2019, the Ministry of Education submitted a bill on ranking teachers to parliament. The bill, which teachers' unions have criticized, includes only "formal" teachers who work "full-time" in education.⁶² Teachers have launched petitions and made union statements calling the government's bill "unfair" and "with many legal flaws" and demanding a review of the bill.⁶³

Protest Group	Cause of Protest	Form of Protest
Teachers of Article 28 of the Statute of Farhangian University ⁶⁴	Inadequate salaries, job insecurity, out of the rating scheme	Rally in front of the parliament, Rally in front of the education buildings in provincial centers, petition to officials
Teachers at non-profit schools ⁶⁵	Salary reduction during the coronavirus, job insecurity	Gathering in front of the parliament
Literacy movement instructors	Not being employed in the Ministry of Education	Gathering in front of the parliament
Teachers' trade unions ⁶⁶	Teacher repression, the Teacher Ranking Bill, the exploitation of informal teachers	Statement

61 [Teachers Guild Channel](#), May 17, 2021

62 [Law Certificate Site](#)

63 [Karzar site](#) and the [telegram channel of the Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#)

64 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 18, 2021, and [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 16, 2021

65 [Fars News Agency](#), May 16, 2021

66 [Radio Zamaneh](#), May 2, 2021

Nurses: Grueling Exploitation

The fourth wave of the coronavirus in Iran began after the end of the Nowruz holiday in late March 2021. The number of hospital patients has increased the workload on nurses and staff. In Khuzestan, officials from the University of Medical Sciences announced that they are not able to sufficiently respond to patients with the available medical staff. The head of the board of directors of the Nursing Organization of the province said that the nurses of Khuzestan work twice the national standard.⁶⁷ The governor of Dezful demanded a budget for the employment of 89-day nurses.⁶⁸

In 2020, the Ministry of Health recruited 89-day nurses to compensate for the shortage of nurses in some provinces. The nurses were fired after their contracts expired. On World Nurses' Day, the head of the Nursing Organization of Iran criticized the non-employment of new nurses, saying that 53,000 nursing licenses were issued, but due to administrative obstacles, the Ministry hired only 3,000 nurses in 2020.⁶⁹

According to officials, since the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic in Iran in February 2020, 100,000 nurses have been infected. Of these, 120 people lost their lives.⁷⁰ The vaccination of health workers has been slow. On May 8, the Vice President of the Supreme Council of the Nursing Organization said, "Thousands of nurses in the country are still not vaccinated. In a discriminatory manner, some officials insist on beating the drums of doctors' privileges over other health workers, and with this discriminatory behavior, frustrate nurses and other paramedics."⁷¹

"When we say that there is injustice in the health system, it is evident in the vaccination process," said the Deputy Director of Development and Resource Management of the Nursing Organization. "We saw that a certain group of colleagues, specifically doctors, got a special quota, even retired doctors who did not have an active office, and the clinic secretaries were all vaccinated, but there are still nurses who are on the front line, especially in the non-governmental sector, who are not vaccinated yet."⁷²

Zamaneh examined the situation faced by nurses in a special report published in July.⁷³

67 [Shahraz](#), April 18, 2021

68 [Islamic Republic News Agency \(IRNA\)](#), April 17, 2021

69 [IRNA](#), May 11, 2021

70 [IRNA](#), May 11, 2021

71 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), May 8, 2021

72 [Etemad Online](#), May 12, 2021

73 [Iranian Nurses: Imposing Sacrifice in the Corridors of Gender and Trade Discrimination](#), Radio Zamaneh, May 13, 2021

Working Children: Expulsion of Immigrant Children

Government officials continue to refuse to disclose the number of working children in Iran. Labor rights activists believe that the number of working children has increased during the coronavirus pandemic. The president of the Association of Social Workers said that 80% of working children do so because of economic poverty.⁷⁴ According to a study that examined the lived experience of working girls in Tehran, economic deprivation is one of the leading causes of working for girls. This study, part of which was published in the Student News Agency with the direct participation of the researcher, shows the long working hours and verbal harassment experienced by working girls in Tehran.⁷⁵

The government refuses to uphold its social obligations to protect working children. Under the "Reorganizing Working and Street Children Plan," the government detains children and threatens their families with complaints. Tehran's Deputy Minister of Social Welfare announced the "reorganization" of 700 working children in 2020.⁷⁶ One month after his remarks, the Director-General of the Tehran Welfare Organization called the "reorganization of working children" a success. They said one child was handed over to his family in the reorganization plan but returned to work on the street once again. Consequently, he was arrested and "cross bordered."⁷⁷ Government officials in Iran last year said that 70% of the working children detained in the reorganization plan were "non-Iranians" and that steps were taken to repatriate them.

The identities of those arrested and transferred to temporary detention centers are recorded based on the iris of their eyes. If the government identifies the child's family, it requires them to pledge not to allow their child to work on the streets again. The Director-General of the Tehran Welfare Organization said that the children's family would be referred to the judicial authorities if the child is caught working twice. If the detained child is an immigrant, the government will deport them, and if they are Iranian, their parents will be fined.⁷⁸ The Deputy Prosecutor of Mashhad announced that lawsuits had been filed against the families of 250 working children.⁷⁹

74 [Asr Iran](#), June 6, 2021

75 [Iranian Students News Agency](#), May 3, 2021

76 [Iranian Students News Agency](#), April 3, 2021

77 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), May 8, 2021

78 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), May 8, 2021

79 [Islamic Republic News Agency](#), May 17, 2021

Informal Workers: Sexual Harassment of Peddlers

Restrictions have increased for workers in informal occupations. Government abuse and violence against informal workers has included violence by municipal officials against street vendors, border guards firing on kulbars (cross-border laborers who serve as “human mules” on Iran’s western borders), and closing the border to sukhtbars (fuel carriers on Iran’s eastern borders).

In Sistan and Baluchistan, after the killing of sukhtbars in March by Iranian border guards, dozens of sukhtbars were left stranded at the Iran-Pakistan border without food and water due to border closures on both sides. According to news sources close to Baluch activists, at least four sukhtbars died of starvation or dehydration on the border between Iran and Pakistan.⁸⁰ Last winter, the Islamic Republic of Iran gave the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) responsibility for supplying border residents with their fuel quota. These residents include people living within a 20-kilometer radius of the border. The decision provoked reactions and opposition from sukhtbars and Baluch activists.

In western Iran, kulbars in Kurdistan, West Azerbaijan, Kermanshah, and Ilam continue to be targeted by government officials and border guards. From February 28 to June 10, 2021, 47 kulbars were injured, and ten were killed, according to reports posted on the Hengaw website. Of these, 3 were shot dead and 39 wounded by direct fire from government officials.⁸¹

Municipal officials routinely attack peddlers in the city streets. In District 20 of Tehran municipality, officers violently attacked a peddler.⁸² Following this incident, the mayor announced that he would prosecute the offending agents. Government news agencies later reported the arrest of three agents who had “committed violations.”⁸³

Violence by municipal officials has increased in recent years. In addition to the harsh treatment of all street vendors, they particularly harass female peddlers. The Harass Watch website, which monitors violence and sexual harassment in Iran, reports on the experience of female vendors who municipal or subway officials have sexually harassed.

“When they confiscate my merchandise, I get confronted with a thousand shameless offers from the agents, so they will get my goods released,” said a female peddler in the Tehran metro. “I had to leave my goods many times. From the station manager to the officer and even the cleaner, all offered me sex many times, and when we reject their offer, they either do not let us rest for a moment at that station or confiscate our goods.”

Another female peddler says that her goods were confiscated after she refused to have sex with a subway officer and that her efforts to get her goods back legally were unsuccessful.⁸⁴

As part of their plans to organize peddlers, Iranian municipalities and government agencies have banned peddlers from operating on busy thoroughfares and relocated them to designated remote markets.

80 [Iran Kargar](#), April 17, 2021

81 Hengaw, the monthly reports of the kulbars’ killings in [March](#), [April](#), and [May](#).

82 [Radio Zamaneh](#), April 15, 2021

83 [The Voice of Ray](#), April 16, 2021

84 [Harass Watch](#), May 1, 2021

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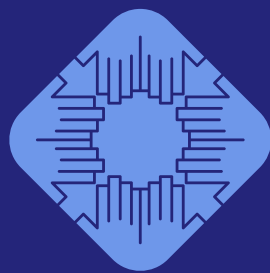
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