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جامعه دفاع از حقوق بشر در ایران

(عضو فدراسیون بین المللی جامعه های حقوق بشر)

League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran

(FIDH member)

## Outline of Events that took place on 17 April and the days following in Evin Prison (based on prisoners' testimonies)

### • 17 April attacks

- At 9:30 am on 17 April, now dubbed by prisoners as 'Black Thursday', a number of plain-clothed – possibly security and intelligence - agents as well as prison guards and officials entered Men's Ward 350 for search and inspection.
- Unlike previous inspections, the agents who were present on 17 April had cameras with them.
- Some of the prisoners inhabiting Rooms 1 and 3 of Ward 350, having had the experience of certain belongings and even food items going missing during previous searches, demanded to be present during inspection of their belongings. They did not physically resist or oppose the inspection; they simply insisted that they wanted to be present in their rooms during the search.
- The personal effects of these prisoners, including blankets, plates, spoons, food, books, and notebooks were all thrown into a pile in the middle of the room. Prisoners who had stayed behind in the rooms voiced their verbal objections and began singing protest songs and shouting "Down with the dictator."
- The prisoners were then reportedly ordered to strip fully, which apparently they refused and verbally objected to.
- Subsequently, the guards sent a large number of the prisoners from other rooms into the yard. Then several of the plain-clothed agents and around 60 members of the Prison Special Guard with batons and anti-riot gear attacked the prisoners who remained in the ward and beat them. Between 20 and 25 of these agents had masks on their faces.
- The prisoners who had gone outdoors who noticed the attack taking place in the ward, returned to verbally object to the beatings and were also beaten, and as a result some were also injured.
- The guards then lined up in the hallway of the ward, and beat the prisoners passing through, hitting them with batons and kicking and punching them. They then handcuffed and blindfolded some of the prisoners and took them into minibuses. The floors of these minibuses and the prison yard were reported to be stained with the blood of these prisoners.

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- Prisoners sent to solitary confinement
  - More than 30 prisoners were sent to solitary confinement cells on 17 April after the attacks. (see List 2 below)
  - In the solitary confinement cells, the prisoners were ill treated including being stripped, being handcuffed and dragged on the floor, being punched and kicked, being sworn at and degraded, being deprived of blankets and underwear, and being blindfolded. All of the prisoners sent to solitary confinement had their hair and moustaches shaved off by prison guards.
  - 10 of the prisoners who had been sent to solitary confinement cells and were not as badly injured as others were returned to Ward 350 on Saturday 19 April in the morning. Seven more were returned to Ward 350 between Monday 21 April and Tuesday 22 April. Two more were returned to Ward 350 on 23 April in the evening.
  - At least 11 prisoners still remained in solitary confinement as of Thursday 24 April. All those who remain in solitary confinement are reportedly on hunger strike.
- Medical care for prisoners injured on 17 April
  - The prisoners who were sent to solitary confinement cells were not provided with immediate medical care in the prison clinic. Prison staff provided them with wound dressings in the solitary confinement cells. Only one prisoner who was sent to solitary confinement (Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand) reported being taken outside of the solitary confinement cell for medical treatment. During a family visit on 21 April, he reported that after spending 3 days in a solitary confinement cell, he was taken to receive treatment on 20 April.
  - Reports indicate that up to five prisoners were initially sent to an outside hospital but were promptly returned to the prison.
  - Prisoners who visited with their families on 21 April reported that 2 of the injured prisoners (Esmaeil Barzegari and Omid Behroozi) were initially put in an ambulance going to Taleghani Hospital (outside of Evin prison) on 17 April but were returned to the prison clinic that same day. Mr. Barzegari was chained to his bed in Evin prison's clinic for one or two days. Mr. Behroozi was also chained (handcuffed and shackled) to his bed in Evin prison's clinic. In protest against this ill-treatment, he went on hunger strike until he was sent back to Ward 350 on 19 April.
  - Akbar Amini Armaki was one of the prisoners sent to a hospital outside of the prison on 19 April and was promptly returned to the prison as a result of the refusal of the Prison Clinic's director to allow his hospitalisation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A photo of a notice from the Emergency Ward of Shohadaye Tajrish Hospital was published on 24 April at: <http://www.kaleme.com/1393/02/04/klm-182040/>

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- A number of prisoners told their families that prison authorities had not prepared X-rays or other medical documents for the injured prisoners in order not to leave any evidence of injuries.
- The days following the 17 April attacks
  - On Sunday 20 April, five prisoners were allowed to call their families. These prisoners are Abdolfattah Soltani and Davar Hosseini Vojdan (both had been sent to solitary confinement on April 17 and then returned to Ward 350 on April 19), and Emad Behavar, Hassan Assadi Zeidabadi, and Amin Chalaki (all three had remained in Ward 350 after the April 17 attack).
  - On Monday 21 April, families were allowed to visit some prisoners from Ward 350. A number of prisoners who appeared in the Visitation Hall of the prison to meet their family members used walking sticks and orthopaedic belts. Their heads had been shaved and they were helping each other to walk. Bruises were visible. According to the prisoners who appeared in the Visitation Hall, they had been subjected to less violence than the others who still remained in solitary confinement.
  - Other prisoners who had not been injured or not been sent to solitary cells also shaved their heads in solidarity with the victims.

**List 1: Injured prisoners**

The following non-exhaustive information has been compiled from letters written by some of the prisoners and statements of families of prisoners who visited their imprisoned relatives on Monday 21 April, and corroborated by two medical doctors imprisoned in Ward 350 who were able to examine most of the prisoners and confirm their injuries:

- 1) Semko Khelghati:** Broken hand; his shirt and clothes were torn off and he was hit on his bare back, neck and shoulder blades.
- 2) Soheil Babadi:** Was hit with batons and got bruises on his neck, arms and shoulder blades.
- 3) Soroush Sabet:** Was hit with batons and suffered a head injury.
- 4) Saeed Matinpour:** Was hit with batons and subsequently lost consciousness for a considerable length of time. He is still in solitary confinement and his condition is not known.
- 5) Esmaeil Barzegari:** Two ribs broken and was urinating blood.
- 6) Omid Behroozi:** Suffered a ruptured artery in his wrist from being cut with a sharp object (possibly glass) which required stitches.
- 7) Kamyar Sabeti-San'at:** Suffered sharp chest pain during the attack indicating a possible problem with his heart. He was given heart medication which reportedly relieved his pain.
- 8) Akbar Amini Armaki:** Suffered a cut above his right ear, ecchymosis and swelling at the back of his head, dizziness, vomiting and blurred eyesight, and a severe head and neck injury. He now has reduced hearing in his right ear.
- 9) Alireza Rajaei:** Contusion on his right wrist; bruise and contusion on his back, on his left and right shoulder blades.
- 10) Amin Chalaki:** Ecchymosis and bruising on his left elbow.
- 11) Massoud Arab-Choubdar:** Contusion on right shoulder blade and upper right arm; swelling at the joint of right shoulder blade.
- 12) Farshid Fat'hi:** Contusion and swelling of toe on left foot. It was established that his toe was broken and he was sent to Taleghani Hospital on 20 April. He may need surgery later to repair the damage.
- 13) Seyyed Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki:** Contusion and minor swelling at the back of head; small cuts on fingers, back of left hand and right palm.
- 14) Majid Mohammadi-Moein:** Left eye inflammation; contusion and slight bruising around left eye.
- 15) Asghar Ghattan:** Contusion and minor swelling at the back of both feet.
- 16) Emad Behavar:** Several contusions all over the body; bruises at the back and shoulder blades; minor cuts and contusion of both wrists.

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- 17) **Peyman Kass-Nejad**: Contusion and swelling of the left wrist and minor cut at the front of right leg.
- 18) **Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand**: Suffered three broken ribs, kidney bleeding, two broken toes on left foot, bruised knee and arm, and swelling at the back of the head.
- 19) **Behzad Arab-Gol**: Head injury and severe nose injury (possibly broken)
- 20) **Saeed Haeri**: Severe bruises on his body.

The following prisoners were sent to solitary confinement on 17 April, and when they were returned to Ward 350 they were examined by the two medical doctors imprisoned there and found to have the following injuries:

- 21) **Assadollah Hadi**: Healing wound on left leg, above the ankle; contusion and inflammation of scalp behind the right ear; healing bruise on right wrist;
- 22) **Assadollah Assadi**: Expansive ecchymosis above the navel, contusion at the back around the right shoulder blade; limited movement of shoulder blade joint;
- 23) **Amir Dourbin Ghaziani**: Healing bruise on right shoulder blade; healing bruise on right knee and limited movement of right knee joint;
- 24) **Davar Hosseini Vojdan**: Bruise on left shoulder blade and limited movement of left shoulder blade;
- 25) **Mostafa Abdi**: Healing injury on scalp with slight swelling;
- 26) **Mostafa Rismanbaf**: Healing bruises on right wrist;
- 27) **Yashar Darulshafa**: Back injury; bruise and swelling on right shoulder blade; healing wound and bruise on left leg;
- 28) **Mehdi Khodaei**: Healing wound on right thumb; healing bruise and slight swelling and contusion on right shoulder blade;
- 29) **Majid Assadi**: Healing bruise on left arm;
- 30) **Houtan Dolati**: Healing bruise and contusion on right wrist
- 31) **Mehrdad Ahankhah**: Head injury

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### **List 2: Prisoners sent to solitary confinement on 17 April**

The following non-exhaustive information has been compiled from letters written by some of the prisoners as well as statements of families of prisoners who visited their imprisoned relatives on Monday 21 April.

(The first 10 prisoners were returned to Ward 350 on 19 April)

1. Abdolfattah Soltani (human rights lawyer)
2. Davar Hosseini Vojdan
3. Arash Hampay
4. Ali Asgari
5. Mostafa Rismanbaf
6. Mostafa Abdi
7. Amir Dourbin Ghaziani
8. Soheil Arabi
9. Assadollah Hadi
10. Assadollah Assadi

(The next 7 prisoners were returned to Ward 350 on 21 or 22 April)

11. Houtan Dolati
12. Yashar Darulshafa
13. Majid Assadi
14. Mehdi Khodaei
15. Soroush Sabet
16. Amir Rezazadeh
17. Saeed Haeri

(The following two prisoners were returned to Ward 350 on the evening of 23 April)

18. Mohammad Davari
19. Mehrdad Ahankhah

(The following prisoner reportedly spent 17 to 20 April in solitary confinement. After participating in a family visit at Evin Prison on 21 April, he has not returned to Ward 350.)

20. Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand (president of the Human Rights Organisation of Kurdistan)

(As of 25 April, the following 11 prisoners had still not returned to Ward 350.)

21. Mohammad-Amin Hadavi
22. Behzad Arab-Gol

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23. Gholamreza Khosravi
24. Abolghassem Fouladvand
25. Reza Akbari-Monfared
26. Behnam Ebrahimzadeh
27. Saeed Matinpour
28. Soheil Babadi
29. Semko Khelghati
30. Reza Hamyari
31. Mohammad Shojaei

### **Responses of prisoners following the 17 April attacks**

- 74 of the prisoners in Ward 350 who were not sent to solitary confinement wrote an open letter to the Attorney-General that was published on 19 April. The letter recounts the events of 17 April and provides an initial diagnosis of the injuries incurred. The signatories say they are prepared to testify.<sup>2</sup>
- Another letter, signed by 28 prisoners, was sent to President Rouhani on 20 April. This letter gives an account of the events of 17 April, asks for those injured to receive a medical examination immediately before their injuries heal, and calls for an investigation by an independent and impartial panel.<sup>3</sup>
- 12 of the prisoners who had remained in Ward 350 on 17 April began a hunger strike on 21 April.<sup>4</sup> In a statement published on Kaleme news website, the prisoners state that they are on hunger strike to “protest the illegal actions and violation of rights of prisoners as well as the failure to investigate the gross and unprecedented abuses, and the presentation of false information distorting the truth.”<sup>5</sup>
- 21 more prisoners<sup>6</sup> also began a hunger strike on 22 April, and issued a statement outlining the events of 17 April and the days that followed:<sup>7</sup>
  - Severe beating of prisoners;
  - Inflicting intentional harm on prisoners;
  - Failure to send injured prisoners to hospitals;
  - Failure to follow up on complaints of prisoners;
  - Forced shaving of heads and faces of prisoners to degrade them;
  - Handcuffing and blindfolding the prisoners;
  - Destroying common and private belongings of prisoners.

The letter also outlines 7 demands, and states that the 21 prisoners will continue their hunger strike until these demands are met:

- All injured prisoners must be returned from solitary confinement;

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<sup>2</sup> This letter is available in Persian here: <http://www.kaleme.com/1393/01/30/klm-180979/>

<sup>3</sup> The letter is public and available in Persian here: <http://www.kaleme.com/1393/01/31/klm-181171/>

<sup>4</sup> These prisoners are Hassan Assadi Zeidabadi, Amir Eslami, Akbar Amini Armaki, Emad Behavar, Ghorban Behzadiannejad, Massoud Pedram, Amin Chalaki, Mohammad Sadegh Rabbani Amlashi, Alireza Rajaei, Seyyed Hossein Ronaghi-Maleki, Reza Shahabi, and Mohsen Mirdamadi.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.kaleme.com/1393/02/01/klm-181438/>

<sup>6</sup> These prisoners are Abdolfattah Soltani, Esmail Barzegari, Vahid Asghari, Arash Hampay, Mehdi Sajedifar, Omid Shahmoradi, Ebrahim Piroozi, Mssoud Arab-Choubdar, Assadollah Hadi, Soheil Arabi, Asghar Ghattan, Amir Dorosti, Vahid Haydarzadeh, Reza Shahabi (signed both letters), Saeed Haeri, Omid Zare'inejad, Yashar Darulshafa, Mehdi Khodaei, Majid Assadi, Ali Salampour, Amir Dourbin Ghaziani.

<sup>7</sup> The letter is public and available here in Persian: <http://www.kaleme.com/1393/02/02/klm-181764/>



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- An investigation into the above-listed events and those responsible for violating prisoners' rights and breaking the law;
- The injured prisoners must be immediately referred to the State Forensic Medicine Department to evaluate their condition and injuries;
- The injured prisoners must be transferred to a hospital for treatment;
- An official apology must be made to prisoners and their families;
- Material and emotional harm suffered by prisoners must be compensated;
- “Representatives of the Iranian people,” as well as [members of] the Citizenship Rights Protection Panel of the Justice Department of Tehran Province should come to Ward 350 of Evin prison to hear the testimonies of the prisoners and prepare a report.

### **Actions and Responses of families of prisoners**

- On 20 April, families of prisoners gathered in front the Parliament building. One MP, Mr. Davatgari, was assigned by the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Committee to meet with the families of the prisoners and report back to the Committee.<sup>8</sup> Some MPs also requested that the families be granted a special visit to Evin Prison to see their imprisoned relatives. Families do have regular visitation days every week where they speak to their imprisoned relatives via telephones behind glass dividers. Some families had face-to-face visitation on 21 April. However, the prisoners who were in solitary confinement on 21 April were not granted visits with their families.
- On 22 April, about 300 family members and supporters gathered in front of the President’s Office.<sup>9</sup> They sent five representatives inside to meet with Mr. Mahdavi, the Special Inspector of the President's Office. The five representatives of the prisoners' families presented Mr. Mahdavi with a letter outlining five demands:
  - Immediately establish an impartial truth commission consisting of representatives of the three branches of the State to visit the prison and investigate the events of 17 April and the days following;
  - Identify those responsible for the violations that took place and hold them accountable before the national Judiciary;
  - Return the prisoners in solitary confinement back to Ward 350 and provide them with medical care;

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<sup>8</sup> Reported in the Daily Shargh, 21 April 2014, page 3, [http://sharghdaily.ir/?News\\_Id=32201](http://sharghdaily.ir/?News_Id=32201)

<sup>9</sup> Video footage of this gathering available at: <http://www.radiofarda.com/content/f3-protesters-arrested-tehran/25358414.html>

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- Have the Judiciary guarantee the protection and rights of prisoners, including allowing leave from prison<sup>10</sup>, allowing for release on probation, and permitting phone calls and face-to-face visits with their families;
- Dismiss the Justice Minister for ignoring the events of 17 April and denying the occurrence of injuries;
- Question the Intelligence Minister about the events of 17 April.

### **Official statements by the Iranian authorities:**

- On 19 April, Minister of Intelligence Hojattoleslam Seyyed Mahmoud Alavi, said that the Ministry of Intelligence would soon issue a statement on the events.<sup>11</sup> No such statement had been issued as of 24 April.
- On 20 April, Minister of Justice Hojattoleslam Mostafa Pourmohammadi, speaking to reporters on the fringe of Women's Day ceremonies, declared that only two prisoners who resisted the searches on 17 April were slightly injured in clashes in Ward 350 of Evin prison.<sup>12</sup>
- On 20 April, then Head of the Prisons Organisation Gholamhossein Esmaeili, speaking to reporters on the fringe of Women's Day ceremonies, denied that any clashes or beating had taken place on 17 April in Evin Prison. He said: "Some prisoners resisted during inspection and refused to leave. Our colleagues moved them. They swore at and insulted our colleagues."<sup>13</sup>
- On 20 April, at a hearing with the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, then Head of the Prisons Organisation Mr. Esmaeili stated that "the inspection team, who was not part of the current prison staff, pushed the [prisoners] out of the rooms. Nobody... was beaten up or injured... The difference this time [compared to previous searches] was that staff from the Prisons Organisation from other prisons did the search and inspection work."<sup>14</sup>
- On 21 April, a local newspaper published that an MP named Mr. Tabesh had claimed that the footage taken by the guards on 17 April in Ward 350 "had been viewed by some MPs of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee and that it would

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<sup>10</sup> Court-granted short-term leave from prison is provided for within Iran's prison system.

<sup>11</sup> Reported in Daily Shargh: <http://tnews.ir/news/88E824210981.html>

<sup>12</sup> Reported by the official Iranian news agency, IRNA on 20 April 2014: <http://www.irna.ir/fa/News/81130086/>

<sup>13</sup> Published by Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA): <http://isna.ir/fa/news/93020100359>

<sup>14</sup> Published by Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA), on 20 April 2014: <http://www.isna.ir/fa/news/93013113473/%D8%AA%DB%8C%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%A9%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%81%D8%B9%D9%84%DB%8C-%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%86%D8%AF-%D9%87%D8%B1>

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be reported to other MPs."<sup>15</sup> As of 24 April, a formal statement from the Parliament on the content of this footage that was allegedly viewed by MPs has yet to be published.

- On 22 April, nine MPs officially requested the Minister of Justice to investigate the events of 17 April in Evin prison's Ward 350.<sup>16</sup>
- On 23 April, Head of the Judiciary Ayatollah Amoli Larijani, speaking to a meeting of high-ranking judicial officials, said the report of the head of the Prisons Organisation showed that no violations had taken place on 17 April.<sup>17</sup>
- On 23 April, the government spokesperson Mr. Nobakht stated at a press conference that a team had been set up to examine the events of 17 April and report on them.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Daily Shargh, 21 April 2014, page 3, [http://sharghdaily.ir/?News\\_Id=32201](http://sharghdaily.ir/?News_Id=32201)

<sup>16</sup> Published by ISNA news agency, 22 April 2014, available at: <http://isna.ir/fa/news/93020201253/%D8%AA%D8%B0%DA%A9%D8%B1-9-%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%88%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%DA%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AF-%D8%AD%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%AB>

<sup>17</sup> Published by Fars News Agency: <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930203001114>

<sup>18</sup> Published by Fars News Agency, available at: <http://farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930127001381>