



Shaparaj Shajarizadeh, women's rights and Iranian political activist

Female Activists Speak Up About Forced Stripping In Prisons

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Several Iranian female political activists have spoken up about prison guards unnecessarily forcing them to strip naked, even in front of cameras, to humiliate them.

Anti-compulsory hijab activist, Mozhgan Keshavarz, who was the first to raise the humiliating strip search of female detainees, told Iran International Monday via video conference that she was first strip-searched after her arrest

in April 2019 and detention at Vozara Detention Center in Tehran where the 22-year-old Mahsa Amini died in custody on September 16 last year.

Keshavarz said the search took place in front of a camera and was repeated when she was taken to Qarchak Prison for women, and then at a Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) detention center where she was photographed completely naked and was told the photos were taken to add to her case file to make sure she would not later claim she was tortured during her detention.

At the IRGC detention center she was held in a solitary cell where she had to sleep on the carpet-covered ground and to shower and use the toilet in front of the camera in the cell.

“I had to wash my body with my clothes on,” she said, adding that she does not think the feelings of humiliation and shame she felt would ever go away. “I’m not the same Mozhgan that I was who always laughed.”

Keshavarz was assaulted by one of her interrogators there and her neck tendon was broken which required surgery. She was finally allowed to go on medical furlough in 2021 and was conditionally freed later. She is currently living in hiding as the IRGC has issued another arrest warrant for her.

Dissident and political prisoner Mozhgan Keshavarz

Keshavarz was arrested with two other activists for offering white roses to women on a Tehran metro train, the International Women’s Day, and asking

them to support anti-compulsory hijab activists.

She was later sentenced by a revolutionary court to a total of twenty-three years and six months -- five years for “assembly and collusion for acting against national security”, one year for “propaganda against the regime”, ten-years for “encouraging moral corruption” and seven years and six months for “insulting sanctities” –but the sentence was later reduced to twelve years and seven months after appeal.

Keshavarz’s story was first shared with the public through the [Twitter account of the Me-too-Movement-Iran](#) on Saturday. She told Iran International that she only wanted to share her feelings with others but soon found out that what happened to her is a routine practice in prisons and many other activists have had the same experience.

Since her revelations, other female activists including Zeynab Zaman, [Shaparak Shajarizadeh](#) and actress Mahnaz Afshar who were subjected to same humiliation have also come forward with their stories.

[In a series of tweets Sunday](#), former political prisoner Nasibeh Shamsaei said she was forced to fully strip in front of prison cameras at a ward run by the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) at Evin Prison of Tehran and again at Qarchak Prison for women.

“I was forced to do this three times. I was told to strip in a cell measuring two by one and a half meters at A2 Ward of the IRGC at Evin Prison with a camera above my head and I didn’t know who was watching... She made me squat and get up twice under the pretext that she wanted to make sure I hadn’t hidden anything in my vagina. The same thing happened when I arrived at Qarchak and once again after an in-person visit,” she wrote.

According to Shamsaei women were forced into such humiliating search even if they were having their periods. “After the in-person visit she forced me into it when I was having my period.”

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