Systematic Torture to Obtain Televised Confessions

Gerdab; A Dictated Scenario

Justice For Iran
Justice for Iran (JFI) is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization established in July 2010. JFI uses methods such as documentation of human rights violations, collecting information, and research about authority figures who played a role in severe and widespread violation of human rights in Iran, as well as use of judicial, political and international mechanisms in place, to execute justice, remove impunity and bring about accountability to the actors and agents of human rights violations inside of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Pursuing its mission and as follow up to the report “Crime Without Punishment,” JFI is in the process of documenting the instances of sexual violence and rape suffered by female political prisoners in Iran since the establishment of Islamic Republic of Iran. The first installment of this report focused on the rapes that took place inside Iranian prisons during the 1980’s and was published in November 2011. The other two parts of this research, concerning the 1990’s and the 2000’s, will be published soon. The series of reports attempt to view torture and imprisonment in different decades in Iran through the eyes of sexuality and is set to explore the topic of violence, harassment and torture of the female political prisoners. By doing so, while legitimizing the pain and suffering endured by the victims of such heinous crimes, the actors and agents of those crimes will be introduced to the public and the society while measures will be taken, through producing valid documents, to hold such individuals accountable and if possible punish them.

Furthermore, JFI is in the process of completing a data bank of information and personal data of the violators of human rights in Iran. This data bank is being compiled not only to be used in bringing forth legal cases, but also to increase the general public’s knowledge regarding the human rights violators in an effort to start the process of accountability.
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1. Introduction

In 2007, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), established an organization titled Center to Investigate Organized Crime (Cyber Crime Office). This center which is a division of the IRGC focuses on ensuring the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the cyber space.

After its establishment, the first case file the center worked on was a project titled “Muzillin”\(^1\) (also known as Gerdab—Whirlpool) in the process of which 90 Persian websites that had pornographic content were shut down. A number of individuals were arrested under the title of Persian porn producers and subsequently transferred to Ward 2A of Evin Prison which is under the control of the IRGC. The Center to Investigate Organized Crime published the names and photographs of 45 of the individuals arrested and called them “Muzillins.” At the same time, the Iranian national television broadcast the confessions of some of the accused in a few episodes. In the televised confessions, the accused admitted that they intended to attack the cultural basis of the Islamic Republic through corrupting and driving the youth from the right path as well as having political agendas against the government or Islam and received money from the American government to establish and produce content for the pornographic websites.

A year and half later, a number of the detainees and relatives of the detainees broke their silence about the treatments endured that led to the said confessions. They filed complaint to official judicial authorities regarding long stretches of time spent in solitary cells, continuous and severe physical and psychological torture to obtain and record false confessions, lack of respect of the authority for the right of due process from the moment of arrest throughout the entire duration of preliminary investigation phase, depriving from the basic rights of visitation with the family or retaining an attorney or being provided with medical treatment, and other such calamities endured by the detainees.

Although serious doubts existed regarding the legality of the detentions and preliminary research, as well as the extraction of confessions, the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes, the judicial arm of Gerdab Project issued indictments for majority of the detainees in late summer of 2009, requesting execution as punishment for some of them. This office is the same authority who had ordered the arrest of the accused, issued their temporary detention warrants, and was instrumental in the explanation of crimes and carrying out the preliminary research.

Different branches of the Revolutionary Court, where the case file of those accused in the Muzillin Project were sent, issued sentences ranging from multiple years of imprisonment to execution. It has been reported that at least 7 individuals accused in this project have been sentenced to execution but we could only verify the issuance of execution order for five individuals.

\(^1\) Muzillin is an Arabic word meaning being lost or wayward. The Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC used this term to describe a project in which individuals have been arrested for collaborating, launching and producing pornographic content.
At the time of finalizing this report, three of those five execution orders issued for the accused in Muzillin Project were upheld by the Supreme Court. The three individuals who are at imminent danger for execution are Ahmad Reza Hashempour, Saeed Malekpour, and Mehdi Alizadeh. Furthermore, the case file of Vahid Asghari, another accused sentenced to execution by the lower court, is awaiting the final judgment of the Supreme Court. Hassan Si Sakhti’s execution order was reduced to life imprisonment by the Amnesty and Forgiveness Commission. Currently, Si Sakhti is serving his sentence in ward 350 of Evin Prison.

Furthermore, at the time of publication of this report, no information could be obtained regarding legal pursuing of the security and judicial officials who had been specifically named in complaints filed by some of the accused. According to the accused, the officials were instrumental in severe violation of the rights of the prisoners, obtaining confession through use of torture and violating the principle of due process and fair trial. The officials responsible for this project, both in the security chapter including the officials of the Cyber Crime Office of the IRGC and other officers of IRGC intelligence Organization, as well as in the judicial system including the inspectors, officials of the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes, officials of the General and Revolutionary Prosecution Office of Tehran, as well as judges of the Revolutionary Courts continue to enjoy impunity and remain in their influential positions of power.

Once finished with Muzillin (Gerdab) Project, Center to Investigate Organized Crime (Cyber Crime Office) played an important role in the Post-2009 election events in identifying, arresting and sentencing the protestors involved in the post election unrest, particularly those active on the cyber space. The Center also systematically identifies and arrest individuals who produce contents on cyber space deem “criminal” by the Center. Contents deemed criminal by the Center, aside from pornographic content, includes insulting the religion of Islam or the Islamic Republic officials, proselytizing the Baha’i faith, propagating Sufism and gnosis, proposal for discrimination against the ethnicities and nations within Iran as well as other minorities, using web space to establish anti-Islamic Republic political groups, publishing methods of circumventing the filtering imposed by the Islamic Republic in order to access websites blocked as well as re-posting (linking) the content of the blocked websites.

What you see before you is a report detailing the widespread and severe violations of the rights of the accused in the Gerdab Project by the authorities and officials of the IRGC Intelligence Office, in particular the Center to Investigate Organized Crime, the General and Revolutionary Prosecution Office of Tehran as well as the courts of Tehran Province. The information cited to in this report have been taken from primary sources, Justice for Iran interviews with some of the detainees, their family members and attorneys and other informed sources, as well as secondary source such as published or unpublished documents and evidences, e.g. court rulings, letters of prisoners and their family members, interview of authority figures connected to this project with the media as well as what was published in the official websites of the responsible organizations.

Due to the important role played by the IRGC’s Center to Investigate Organized Crime, a separate section of the report is dedicated to this center. Furthermore, profiles of two of the security / judicial officials who were both instrumental in Gerdab Project as well as other
human rights violations are brought in parts of the report. The report also includes a legal analysis of the severe cases of violations of the rights of those accused in *Gerdab* Project with respect to the domestic laws of the Islamic Republic.

## 2. Some Victims of Human Rights Violation in the *Gerdab* Project

### 2.1. Saeed Malekpour

**Biography**

Born in June 1975, Saeed Malekpour graduated from Material Engineering department at Sharif University of Technology in Iran. He has worked as an expert at Iran Khodrow, Razi Research Center and was one of the inspectors of Garma Felez Company. In July 2004, Malekpour migrated to Canada with his wife and started his work as a software developer and a freelance designer for internet pages. One of the programs he wrote was purchased by an Iranian website and later used to disseminate pornographic content. As customary, his name was inscribed in the codes of the software which led to the Iranian authorities’ identification of him.²

**Arrest and Other Details of Case File**

Pursuant to his father’s severe sickness, Malekpour traveled to Iran from Canada on October 1, 2008. On October 4, 2008, he was arrested in the vicinity of Vanak square by a number of plain clothes agents. From that date until August 19, 2009 (total of 320 days) Malekpour was held in a solitary cell with dimensions 1.7 x 2 meters at ward 2A of Evin Prison; this ward is under the control of the Intelligence Office of the IRGC and the prisoners are held in complete isolation from the outside world, without access to books, newspaper or other accommodation. At the time of Malekpour’s detention, head of that office was Hojjatolislam Gholamhossein Ramezani.

On March 16, 2009, Saeed Malekpour’s father passed away. However, Malekpour was only informed of this development 40 days later when he was allowed to have a short conversation with his family.

On March 18, 2009, the Cyber Defense office of the IRGC, under the supervision of Sergeants Mohammad Sadeghi, issued an announcement on their website, *Gerdab* (www.gerdab.ir), stating, “The Intelligence forces of the IRGC have identified a number of organized anti-religion, anti-culture and anti-public chastity networks active in Persian on the internet and have annihilated them in a complex operation.”³

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Two days later, a movie was broadcasted from the Iranian national television in which Saeed Malekpour and a few others accused in the case confessed to their crimes. In his confession, Malekpour accepted responsibility for management of pornographic websites such as xpersia, Sahvat Sara (Lust Palace), and Avizoon (Dangled) and said, “One of the ways in which we produced obscene images and [promoted] lewd behavior was through hacking the webcam of individuals.”

He added, “Once we promoted and distributed obscenity and lewd behavior, we decided to ridicule religious belief. We would superimpose obscene photographs on religious ceremonies or images. Even in writing we ridiculed the religious ceremonies. Our aim was to strike a blow to the religious belief of the people, in particular the youth. When a young person loses his religious beliefs, he will be prepared to do many other things.”

The video confession of Saeed Malekpour was broadcast from Iranian national television prior to his trial and conviction.

Finally, the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes issued an indictment in which it requested maximum punishment (execution) for Malekpour. The case file is then handed over to branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Mohammad Moghiseh. Prior to this development, in a television program titled “Shock,” Reza Ja’fari, Head of the aforementioned prosecution office, called Malekpour and others accused in the same case file “corrupts on earth” and deserving of execution. In parts of the program, Ja’fari said, “A person who is managing a large number of sites, is in contact with 250 obscene and amoral websites in the world, promotes illicit acts and incest there, promotes sinful actions with children, bestiality and such, insults what is deemed holy in our faith, insults our prophet and other holy prophets, questions the mourning processions, and spews what he deserves upon our holy relics, if he cannot be called “corrupt on earth,” then nothing in the world can be titled as such. When we identify what the issue [crime] is, naturally the sentence for it is clear as well. The sentence and punishment for being a corrupt on earth is execution... Our request is exactly that. I mean that if such punishment cannot be issued for these people, then certainly there is a problem with either our work or our law. Naturally, we are pursuing their work... We will show no mercy in dealing with them because they invaded the personal space of people and played with people’s beliefs and made efforts for promotion of corruption on earth in the society.”

In the same television program, another judge named Kian Manesh, who at the time was an inspector at branch 21 of the Prosecution Office of Tehran, affirmed that the arrest warrants for Saeed Malekpour and others accused in the case were issued by himself and his colleagues.

The accusations listed in the indictment of Saeed Malekpour are as follows:

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\(^{4}\) A recording of the program is available on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MzJxyOxxD0&feature=related.

\(^{5}\) Id.
action against national security through propaganda against the regime by way of distributing different material and collaborating with Anti-regime groups by way of launching different websites and providing and publishing derogatory material and having contact with foreign agents and disseminating insulting materials

2. Insulting what is holy and necessary in the religion of Islam and the grand prophets and the innocent Imams, as well as the holy Mecca and prayer and ... through preparation and dissemination of derogatory images and stories

3. insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the supreme leader as well as the respected office of the president through publication of derogatory photos, stories and material

4. illegal earning thought receiving money for managing various illegal and anti Shari’a sites

5. preparing, producing and disseminating obscene works such as photographs, movies, and stories through the computer, communication and email systems as well as launching multiple obscene sites in a systematic manner with the aim of collapsing and disrupting the cultural and social security of the families and persuasion and encouragement to disseminate corruption and prostitution in the society

On August 19, 2009, Malekpour was transferred from his solitary cell to the general area of ward 2A where he remained until December 1, 2009. On that day, Malekpour was once again transferred to a solitary cell, this time in Ward 240 of Evin Prison which is also under the control of IRGC. He remained in absolute solitary confinement for another 48 days.

On February 8, 2010, Malekpour was transferred to the general ward of Evin Prison, first to Andarzgah 7 and then ward 350.

The first session of Saeed Malekpour’s trial took place on November 9, 2010 at branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court presided over by Judge Mohammad Moghiseh. In this session, Malekpour denied all the charges against him and stated that his confessions were obtained under torture.

The initial sentence of the preliminary court was issued on December 9, 2010. In the sentence, Judge Moghiseh charged Malekpour with being a corrupt on earth for trying to corrupt the youth and cause the collapse of the interests of the Islamic Republic through launching pornographic websites and sentenced him to execution. Malekpour also received 7 years of imprisonment for insulting Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei and the president as well as insulting what is holy. Part of the verdict reads as:

Noting the entire content of the case file and the investigations done as direct confessions of [the accused] in different stages of the investigation and the report of the agents and the documents available in his case file [demonstrating that] in a systematic manner, he created networks inside and outside of the country and direct collaboration of the foreign nations by providing technical capabilities for the accused, [and his actions] with the purpose of spreading and increasing corruption in the society and straying the youth from the correct path with the intention of collapsing the holy aims
of the IRI through cultural invasion and his pivotal and undisputable role in the cultural war in the last years against the IRI, as per article 10, section A of article 3 of the Law of Punishment of Individuals with Illegal Activity in Audio Visual Capacity and article 190 of the Islamic Penal Code, the court finds the accused to be corrupt on earth and issues and announces the verdict of execution for the accused.

Furthermore, with respect to the accused directing insults to the founder of the Islamic Republic, the exalted Imam Khomeini (May God’s Blessings be upon him) and the elevated supreme leader, as per article 514 of the Islamic Penal Code, the court sentences the accused to 2 years of imprisonment, taking into account the time already spent in detention. In the case of insulting the president, as per article 609 of the Islamic Penal Code, the accused in sentenced to six months of imprisonment, taking into account the time spent in detention. In the case of insulting what is holy in Islam, as per article 513 of the Islamic Penal Code, the accused in sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, taking into account the time spent in detention.

By this time and as of February 8, 2010 Saeed Malekpour had been transferred to general ward of Evin Prison where, like other prisoners, he was granted weekly visitation rights. He took advantage of the more relax atmosphere at the general ward and was able to write a letter and send it out of prison. In the letter, he describes how he was arrested and the severe manners in which he was tortured, both while in ward 2A and at another location known as “Technical Office,” in order to extract a confession out of him:

Most of the time, the tortures were performed by a group. While I remained blindfolded and handcuffed, several individuals armed with cables, batons, and their fists struck and punched me. At times, they would flog my head and neck and other body parts. Such mistreatment was aimed at forcing me to write what the interrogators were dictating, and to compel me to play a role in front of the camera based on their scenarios. Sometimes, they used extremely painful electrical shock that would paralyze me temporarily. Once in October 2008, the interrogators stripped me while I was blindfolded and threatened to use a bottle of water [on me]. One of those days, as a result of being kicked, punched, and lashed with cables on my head and face, my face became very swollen. I lost consciousness several times while being beaten, but each time they would bring me to by splashing water on my face [and continued with the torture]. That night, they returned me to my cell. At the end of the night when the lights were out, I realized my ear was bleeding. I banged on the door of my cell, but nobody came. The next day I was transferred to Evin prison’s clinic while half of my body was paralyzed and I was unable to move. The doctor at the clinic, after seeing my condition, insisted that I should be transferred to a hospital. However, I was returned to my cell instead, and I was left there until 9:00pm. At 9 pm, I was transferred along with three guards, while hand cuffed and blindfolded to Baghiatollah

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6 Complete translated text of Saeed Malekpour’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.
7 Meaning using the bottle to rape Malekpour.
hospital. On our way to the hospital, the guards told me I was not allowed to give my real name and ordered me to use the alias Mohammad Saeedi. They threatened me with severe torture if I did not follow their orders.

Before I was able to be examined by the doctor, one of the guards met with the doctor on duty in the emergency room; I entered a few minutes later. Without performing any examinations, radiography, or tests, the doctor simply stated that my problem was stress related. He wrote his diagnosis on the medical report and prescribed a few pills. When I asked him to at least wash my ear the doctor said that it was not necessary. In that condition, I was returned to the detention centre with the blood clot remaining in my ear. For 20 days, the left side of my body was paralyzed, and I had little control over my left arm and leg muscles. I also had difficulty walking. Aside from these tortures, on January 24, 2009 at the Technical Office, after being subject to severe beatings, one of the interrogators threatened to pull out my tooth with a pair of tongs. One of my teeth broke and my jaw was displaced after I was kicked in the face by him. However, the physical tortures were nothing compared to the psychological torments.

I endured long solitary confinement time (totaling to more than one year) without phone calls or the possibility of visiting my loved ones, constant threats to arrest and torture my wife and family if I did not cooperate, threats to kill me. They also provided me with false news of arresting my wife. My mental health was severely threatened. I had no access to any books or journals in the solitary cells, and at times, I would not speak to anybody for days.

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A secret detention center belonging to the IRGC at an undisclosed location outside of Evin Prison complex.
About the promises that his interrogators gave him, he writes, “I was promised in the presence of the inspector assigned to the case [Mohammad Mehdi Mousavi9] that if I participate in their false televised confession, they would release me conditionally or on bail until the court date. They also promised that I will enjoy the maximum leniency in the issued indictment. I was promised that the indictment would ask for a maximum of two years imprisonment and since time spent in solitary cell is counted as more than normal detention, I could potentially be conditionally released.”

In an interview with B.B.C., Malekpour’s wife, Zohreh Eftekhari, said, “Although a year and half has passed since his interrogations, signs of torture are still visible on Saeed Malekpour’s body.”

In a letter published on October 24, 2010, Eftekhari wrote to Ayatollah Larijani, Head of the Judiciary that Judge Moghiseh rejected Malekpour’s request to be examined by the Medical examiner in order for the signs of torture on his body to be documented.11 In the same letter, Eftekhari noted that the court session of Malekpour lasted only 15 minutes.

After the publication of the letters and the interview of Eftekhari with different media outlets, a new case file is put together for both Malekpour and Eftekhari. In this case file, Malekpour is accused of “causing confusion amongst the masses” and “conspiring with his wife to commit action against national security.” So far, there have been no new developments on this case file.

On June 5, 2011, Alizadeh Tabataba’i, one of Malekpour’s attorneys announces that branch 22 of the Supreme Court have halted Malekpour’s execution sentence due to deficiency in the research stage of the proceedings and so the case file has been send back to Branch 28 for completion of research and issuance of a new sentence.12 In relation to the deficiency, the Supreme Court asked that the Revolutionary Court look into the accusation of torture brought forth by Malekpour and his attorneys. Supreme Court also requested for an independent expert form the Office of Justice who specializes in computer to look into the complaint of Malekpour’s attorneys stating that it is technically impossible for Siavash Hossein Khani, manager of Avizoon pornographic website, to be the same person as Saeed Malekpour.

On October 2, 2011, following the return of the case file to Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court by the Supreme Court, the last session of Malekpour’s trial convened. In this session, Malekpour again denied all charges against him and declared that he was innocent.

Without seeking the opinion of an official expert form the Office of Justice regarding whether or not Siavash Hossein Khani was an alias for Malekpour, the aforementioned trial

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9 Whether or not this is the real name of the individual is still unclear to us.
resulted in an execution verdict. Furthermore, investigation surrounding the claim of torture comprised of the court asking Malekpour’s interrogator, the man he had accused of performing torture on him, whether or not his claim is true. In response, the interrogator stated that Malekpour’s claim of being tortured is wholly without merit and he only stated such claims in hopes of escaping punishment. The court accepted the interrogators’ response without looking into any of Malekpour’s medical records or prison documents and dismissed the claim of torture.

On January 29, 2012, Official News Agencies of the Islamic Republic announced that Saeed Malekpour’s execution sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court and thereby, Malekpour’s final chance of legal recourse ended. Malekpour’s attorneys had been informed of the content of the decision of the Supreme Court ten days prior to the broadcasting of the news. They considered the upholding of the execution sentence by the judges of Branch 32 of the Supreme Court, who had prior to this halted the sentence due to what they deemed to be insufficient research, “highly suspect” and “illegal” particularly in the utter absence of any research or follow up done with regards to what the supreme court judges had requested in order to rectify the insufficiency.

In an interview aired on January 17, 2012 from BBC, Shadi Sadr, human right activist and attorney at law, announced, “It is clear that the Cyber Defense Office of IRGC has imposed its extrajudicial will on the Supreme Court in order to acquire an approval for the verdict.”

Saeed Malekpour’s execution verdict has been sent to the Office to Carry-out Sentences for General and Revolutionary Courts of Tehran.

In October 2010, Saeed Malekpour was transferred back to ward 2A from ward 350. He is allowed a weekly phone call for a few minutes and one monthly visitation with his family.

Although Malekpour has been in detention for over three years, his attorneys were only allowed to visit him two or three times prior to the convening of the second court session. In fact, Malekpour had not met his attorneys until his first court session, where he met and became acquainted with his defense attorneys inside of the court room.

Throughout the time Saeed Malekpour has been incarcerated, different international organizations such as Amnesty International and the International Society for Defense of Human Rights, have expressed their concerns regarding his deplorable condition and the violation of his human rights as well as the violation of the right of due process in his case.

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2.2. Vahid Asghari

Biography

Born on April 3, 1986 in the city of Mianeh, East Azerbaijan Province, Vahid Asghari was a student of Informatics Sciences at India University. In order to make a living while in India, Asghari sold host and domain spaces to Persian weblogs and websites. Some of such weblogs and websites belonged to dissident opposition members, such as Ahmad Batebi. According to Ahmad Asghari, his brother Vahid Asghari never had a website or weblog of his own.

Arrest and Other Details of Case File

After four years of education in India, Asghari returns to Iran to visit his family. On May 8, 2008, Asghari was arrested at Imam Khomeini International Airport by plain clothed agents of IRGC while trying to leave Iran for India in order to present his thesis and graduate. He was subsequently transferred to a solitary cell at ward 2A of Evin Prison—the ward under the control of IRGC—and remained in that ward for 16 months. Asghari was one of the first individuals arrested in connection with Gerdab Project. The first time he was permitted to have visitation was a year after his arrest when he was transferred from the solitary cell at ward 2A to the general area of ward 2A. For 16 months and until March 2010, when Asghari was transferred to general ward of Evin Prison (ward 350), he was in a detention center that was controlled by the IRGC. By the time of the publication of this report, Asghari has been held in temporary detention for three years and nine months.

Directed by Sergeant Mohammad Sadeghi, the Center to Investigate Organized Crime is part of the Cyber Defense Office of IRGC. In March 18, 2009, the Center published an announcement on its official website, Gerdab at www.gerdab.ir, and announced the annihilation of anti-security, anti-religion, Anti-culture and anti-chastity websites.

Less than a month later, the website Gerdab introduced Vahid Asghari as the first individual accused in Project “Muzillin-1” describing him as, “Vahid A, a.k.a Arya Daneshkar, is director of the largest collection of obscene websites in Persian on the internet; he played an important role in producing and providing obscene content in Persian (films, images, stories, ...) and directed the users toward obscene Persian and foreign content of other sites with anti-religious and anti-revolutionary content.

16 Complete translated text of Vahid Asghari’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.
17 Written Testimony of Ahmad Asghari, Justice for Iran.
Sergeant Mohammed Sadeghi explained the charges of Vahid A as: “[In a note written] to individuals active in anti-religious, anti-security and anti-moral fields, he [Asghari] wrote, “we value your work and that is the major reason for our support. Be assured that your site will never be mentioned anywhere for a security reasons.”

**Gerdab** website also writes about Vahid Asghari: “The aforementioned started his work in 2003 through launching websites and groups on the internet. By receiving technical support from the American company Dream Host for a small fee, he started designing and carrying out a systematic action to identify activists and producers of anti-religious, anti-security, and anti-moral content on the internet and uniting them and providing them with technical support for free. Registering domain and hosting, designing and installing software for the websites and ... technical and financial support of the websites such as Free Man Notes (anti-religious), Shazdeh (anti-moral and anti-religious), Ahmad Batebi (anti-security), Snow White (anti-moral), aylar4u.com (anti-moral), announcing his willingness for technical support and launching of an obscene Iranian e-magazine and providing specific domains for obscene Iranian websites, played a significant role in promoting cyber nihilism in Persian and ridiculing and insulting the Islamic beliefs and the Islamic Revolution of Iran as well as [aiding] the activity of the enemies of the Islamic Revolution. Aside from providing services and support for free to the aforementioned sites for reasons that he states as “supporting the free flow of information and free access of the Iranian people to educational sexual content in Persian and making such content accessible in Persian for those interested as well as the right to freedom of expression even in political and sexual matter,” Arya Daneshkar played an important role in attracting and hiding the identity and information of the managers of the anti-religious, anti-moral, and anti-security sites and ensured their safety.

What was mentioned above is, in and of itself, a testament to the execution of a pre-planned and systematic scenario by the aforementioned with the support and technical backing of the Dream Host Company in USA and the financial backing of Google, as well as other internet advertising companies.

The activities of the aforementioned are as follows:

- Launching 41 sites with obscene, vulgar, anti-religious, and anti-security content in .... Company. (It is noteworthy to mention that .... Company supported and hosted majority of the obscene, anti-religious, and anti-security and opposition Iranian websites that are active in USA.) His directing panel in this company included 83 domains, 5 sub domains, 752/5 Giga bytes of space (Host) plus 2 Giga bytes of additional space each week, 9960 Giga Bytes bandwidth plus 40 Giga bytes additional each week, unlimited email account in which the accused has so far created 109 mail boxes, unlimited FTP account in which the accused has so far created 30 usernames,

- Financial and technical support and backing (registering the domain and hosting) of the anti-religious website of Free Man Notes (freemannotes.com) that belonged to the brother of the accused,
• Financial and technical support and backing (registering the domain and hosting) of 4 websites of Ahmad Batebi, a fugitive security-criminal, through direct contact with him via the internet and collaborating in designing the mentioned sites, placing the logo of his site in other websites and advertizing for it online, contact with servers of interest in order to work on the issues related to these sites, installing the necessary software on these sites and ... It is noteworthy that the accused registered a domain, provided hosting and an electronic mailbox as well as financial and technical support for Ahmad Batebi and his websites, knowing full well that he is a security-criminal and a fugitive,

• Financial and technical support and backing (registering the domain and hosting the site and advertizing) of the obscene website of Red and White (Shazdeh.com) and creating mirror domains (sorkhosefid.in and sorkhosefid.com) to circumvent filtering. The aforementioned site contains obscene comedy,

• Announcing willingness to financially and technically support an obscene Iranian e-magazine under the guise of open access of Iranian people to educational sexual material in Persian and providing access to homosexual content for those interested in such material in the Persian language,

• Providing obscene stories with anti-religious, anti-revolutionary content in one of the obscene, anti-religious, anti-revolutionary websites,

• Insulting Imam Khomeini, the exalted office of the supreme leader and the officials of the regime through placing of altered and insulting images in their sites,

• Placing of anti-revolutionary clips of the story of the revolution with insulting content regarding the departed Imam (may the blessing of god be upon him), the leader of the revolution, and Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadi Nejad, the president, on the internet,

• Linking to anti-Islamic site of .... under the guise of “let’s combat superstition and ignorance and become anew at the new year,” as well as “combating superstition and ignorance,” and placing the logo of that site on his other sites,

• Placing an ad for sale of underage Iranian girls,

• Registering and selling domain to Iranian obscene websites such as Shahvat Sara (Lust Palace),

• Producing and publishing the first series of sexy stories in Persian on the internet, including two book with over 600 pages of obscene stories in Persian about topics such as homosexuality, illicit incest and ...,

• Preparing the way for spreading prostitution in the society through starting obscene friend finding websites in Persian,

• Launching two obscene groups in Yahoo! that was used as a place to send obscene Persian material and newsletters of obscene sites mentioned above,

• Exchange of links and logo with other obscene Persian sites in order to guide the Iranian user traffic into those sites and introducing the obscene Persian sites to the Persian speakers and creating a filter-breaker and proxy addresses for entering obscene and filtered sites in order to facilitate the entry of users into these sites,
Creating the domain 88031530.com (the number is the phone number of the Filtering Committee) for the Einstein collection of sites in order to ridicule the filtering by using their phone number as the address of the site and titling it Sex in Iran website,

Requesting the users to send obscene images and stories and upon receiving those, placing them in their obscene websites,

Receiving images insulting to the Lord of the Martyrs [the third Imam of the Shiite, Hossein ibn Ali] (peace be upon him) and expressing thanks for it and asking the user who sent those images to send more,

Selling and showing Iranian obscene movies copy righted to the collection of sites belonging to the accused,

Selling obscene Iranian movies to a manager of a foreign obscene site,

Activity in a pyramid scheme network along with his brother,

Inviting users who are medical experts to collaborate in launching a question and answer section focused on obscene matter,

Sending material to the obscene website of Avizoon and advertizing for his sites there.\(^{19}\)

A few days after the publication of this announcement on Gerdab website, the Iranian national television broadcast a movie in which Vahid Asghari and a few other accused in the case confess to their crimes. Asghari spoke in parts of that movie, “I provided individuals who had obscene sites or sites that opposed the Islamic Republic with free host and space... My income for launching my own series of obscene, anti-religious and anti-regime websites, which also served to support those sites, was between 1000 to 4000 dollars that I received on a monthly basis from the American Citi Bank. It was in form of a check... my second action was sending links of the opposition websites to the collection of groups that I had created.”

When these confessions aired from the Iranian television, Vahid Asghari had not yet been tried or sentenced by a court.

Eventually, an indictment was issued asking for maximum punishment (execution) and the case file was sent from the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes to branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court presided over by Judge Abulghasem Salavati. Prior to this development, Reza Ja’fari, head of the Special Prosecution office, had declared in a television program titled “Shock” that the prosecution office had requested maximum punishment, or execution, for all those accused in this case file as they were all “corrupt on Earth.”

Later, in a letter of complaint sent out of Evin Prison on March 10, 2010, when he was transferred to general ward 350 from ward 2A, Asghari writes:

Under the existing laws and regulations pertaining to the freedom of information on the internet, I provided host and domain to human rights activists, political prisoners, university students who were arrested and were being tortured such as Ahmad Batebi, women’s rights activists such as the weblog zarhahb.com, and social and political refugees residing outside of Iran. I also technically and financially supported and managed their websites which is not in contravention with holy laws that guarantee human rights of individuals. Whatever they wrote in their respective websites they did under their own responsibility and not mine. Accusing me of soft overthrow and cyber warfare, both being political crimes, will mean that I must be tried in the presence of a jury. If the law is to be executed properly about me, [it must be noted] that I have not created anything of my own. If fact from the moment of my entry into the internet, I never wrote a piece myself and merely [technically] supported websites that are recognized [here] to be anti-regime, anti-revolution, and anti-faith.20

The letter of complaint is written to the attention of Judge Abulghasem Salavati, Head of Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court as well as the Military Prosecution Office of Tehran. In the letter, Vahid Asghari describes the tortures he was subject to:

[T]he interrogators caused a change in my mood and behavior as well as damaging and fracturing of the skull, nose, backbone and neck bones and topical bleeding from the interior of my nose, bleeding of the gum and my hands and feet. There were also blows struck to the brain, bruising and fatiguing of the body and feet, lashes, hose and baton blows, heavy slaps and punches to the head and brain and ears and my unprotected face, kicking to my feet, stomach, and head and bleeding from the gums and my hands and feet. Blows struck to the brain, bruising and fatiguing of the body and feet, lashes and baton blows took place at all hours of the day and night and happened to everyone. I was present at the scene when others were being harassed and hurt. The obstinate interrogators and experts of the Judiciary and the Cyber Defense Army of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), aside from punishments bestowed without any legal or sharia based verdict, repeatedly spewed insults and vulgar and sexually charges curses about me, my family, and even their own families and god, the prophet (may god protect us), and the leader.

For months, they illegally took me into their custody from Evin, blindfolded and handcuffed, and transport me to the torture lair of IRGC, secret code “Firm—sherkat,” at an undisclosed location that operates in an extrajudicial manner in order to achieve their goal of causing diversion in and abusing [...] the case file. They placed me in a tight and dark cupboard filled with harmful critters, dungeons, and bath tub (while hand and feet were cuffed) and

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20 Complete translated text of Vahid Asghari’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.
placed suffocating bags that would not allow oxygen penetration over my head (exactly like the bags used in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib). They beat me harshly with wooden sticks, hung me upside down with a rope and handcuffs and slapped and lashed me.

They showed large and sharp liquid glue,\(^2\) struck me on my sides and stomach with brass knuckles and placed a knife on my throat or wrists and threaten me with murder or gang rape and thus, forcefully dictate what they wanted to me; they made promises and forced me to falsely confess and sign and fingerprint [the writing]. They also videotaped the false confessions many times.

In his letter, Asghari also stated that he was never permitted to meet with his attorneys. Asghari also complains to the Military Prosecution Office as well as the Supreme Disciplinary Court of Judges from the research judge Ghasem Zadeh, special security inspector Mohammad Mohammadi Mousavi and the torturing interrogators, case experts and the IRGC. However, no document has been found indicating that his complaint was followed up on. On July 31, 2010, Asghari filed another complaint against the IRGC for having committed crimes against humanity. According to Ahmad Asghari, brother of Vahid Asghari, none of the complaints have so far been processed.\(^2\)

In January 2012, Judge Abulghasem Salavati issued execution sentence for Vahid Asghari. Asghari protested the sentence so his case file was returned to branch 6 of the Supreme Court for review. At the time of publication of this report, the Supreme Court had not yet issued its decision.

Vahid Asghari is presently held at ward 350 of Evin Prison in temporary detention. His period of detention has lasted near four years. His family members and ward mates have announced that, due to blows struck to his skull and other tortures suffered during his period of interrogation at ward 2A, Asghari has lost his mental balance. The Medical Examiner has also affirmed that Vahid Asghari is clinically insane. Under such conditions, on January 28, 2012, Asghari was taken out of ward 350 by IRGC interrogators and convinced that if he were to give another televised confession, his execution sentence will be dismissed. Asghari agreed, once again, to confess against himself and the others accused in this case file.\(^2\)

Throughout the time since Asghari’s arrest, his family has been subject to pressures and threats. One of his brothers was also detained and only released after a bail of 100 million Tomans (roughly $100,000) was posted for him. His other brother who is a refugee seeking asylum in turkey has been harassed and threatened.

\(^2\) Meaning the tube of a liquid glue that has a narrow tip and was used for threatening the victim to rape.
\(^2\) Written testimony of Ahmad Asghari, Justice for Iran.
2.3. Ahmad-Reza Hashempour

Biography
Born in 1970 in Shiraz, Ahmadreza Hashempour resided in Shiraz and holds a doctorate degree. His father was an employee of the petroleum company of Gachsaran and was assassinated in September of 1981 by the "Mojahedin-e Khalq" Organization.

Arrest and Other Details of the Case File

The exact date of Hashempour’s arrest is unclear but it appears that, as with the others accused in Muzillin Project, he was arrested around the summer of 2008. From the time of his arrest, Hashempour has been kept at ward 2A of Evin Prison, a ward under the control of the IRGC. In the last three years since Hashempour has been in temporary detention, he was never transferred, even for a short while, to the general ward.

After the announcement of annihilating the organized anti-religion, anti-security and anti-culture and anti-public chastity networks by the IRGC intelligence forces, some information is published on Gerdab website about Hashempour.

On the website of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime, Hashempour is introduced as one of the accused in the case file of Muzillin-3. About him, the website says, "[Hashempour] can be considered one of the most active members of the anti-religion and obscene websites available in Persian. He ... worked on producing and publishing obscene content for anti-religion and obscene websites such as amizesh.com, avizoon.com, and shahvatsara.com.

A Major and widespread activity of accused, Ahmadreza H.P., was writing and publishing obscene stories in multiple installments about cross gender relations as well as homosexual relations. Aside from writing and publishing obscene stories regarding anti-Shari’ā and uncustosm amy sexual interactions, he personally sent obscene photographs and clips to the list serves that caused the spread of such content on the internet."

Two days after the publication of the announcement of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime of IRGC, a movie was broadcast from the Iranian national television in which Ahmadreza Hashempour and a few others accused in the case confess to their crimes. In parts of the movie, Hashempour said, “I had contact with these sites through publishing of immoral stories.”

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Others accused in this case file, including Saeed Malekpour, Vahid Asghari and Shahrouz Vaziri and their families spoke of unbearable tortures inflicted upon the accused by the interrogators of the IRGC intelligence office in order to extract testimony and a televised confession against themselves.\(^{26}\) In his letter of complaint, Vahid Asghari writes,

> There were also blows struck to the brain, bruising and fatiguing of the body and feet, lashes, hose and baton blows, heavy slaps and punches to the head and brain and ears and my unprotected face, kicking to my feet, stomach, and head and bleeding from the gums and my hands and feet. Blows struck to the brain, bruising and fatiguing of the body and feet, lashes and baton blows took place at all hours of the day and night and happened to everyone. I was present at the scene when others were being harassed and hurt.\(^{27}\)

By examining the collection of the text published by other individuals accused in the same case file as Hashempour, it can be deduced that he was subject to much coercion inflicted through use of torture and force in order to offer confession.

Eventually, an indictment was issued asking for maximum punishment (execution) for Hashempour and his case file was sent from Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes to the Revolutionary Court. Prior to this development, Reza Ja’fari, head of the Special Prosecution office, had declared in a television program titled “Shock” that he considered all the accused in this case to be “corrupts on Earth” deserving of execution.\(^{28}\)

In the same television program, another judge named Kian Manesh who at the time was working at Prosecution Office of District 21 of Tehran as an investigator admits that the arrest warrant for Hashempour and others accused were issued by him and his colleagues.\(^{29}\)

In its process of research, Justice for Iran was unable to discover which branch of the Revolutionary Court issued the execution verdict of Ahmadreza Hashempour. However, in January 2012, the Supreme Court upheld the execution order issued for Hashempour. The branch upholding the execution verdict was also not identified.

\(^{26}\) See sections 2.1 and 2.2 for cases of Saeed Malekpour and Vahid Asghari. Furthermore, Shahrouz Vaziri, another individual accused in this case file says, “I, Shahrouz Vaziri, Son of Mazaher, am willing to testify to court about the physical and psychological torture, long term solitary confinement, insults and cursing and beatings by IRGC interrogators, extracting forced and dictated confessions and the absence of any contact with the family or ability to retain an attorney from March 14, 2009 to February 8, 2010. Shahrouz Vaziri, March 7, 2010”

\(^{27}\) See the letter in the appendices.

\(^{28}\) The film can be viewed on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MzJxyOxxD0&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MzJxyOxxD0&feature=related).

\(^{29}\) Id.
3. Organizations and Officials Responsible for the Violation of Human Rights in Gerdbab Project

As explained before, Center to Investigate Organized Crime, a subset of the Cyber Defense Office which is itself a branch of IRGC intelligence Office, is the security organization playing the most significant role in the Gerdbab Project. This center was established in 2007 and has since been managed by Sergeants Mohammad Sadeghi. In 2008 and when the arrests resulting from the Gerdbab Project began, Hojjatolislam Gholamhossein Ramezani, was the Intelligence Deputy of IRGC. Hossein Ta’eb replaced Ramezani as the IRGC Intelligence Deputy in 2009. The detainees and their relatives also named IRGC intelligence interrogators Masoud (Pseudonym) and Tavakkoli (probably a pseudonym), the real identity of both is unclear, as the main interrogators of the Gerdbab Project. Gerdbab website, the official outlet of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime, aside from reporting news and announcements of the Center, is also engaged in publishing names and photographs of the political protestors making the website a tool for oppression. The site is registered in the name of Mehran Emami. Also, Mohammadi Nia, Deputy Director of Center to Investigate Organized Crime, has discussed different projects of the Center in interviews and speeches.

Meanwhile, the Prosecution Office of Tehran, at the time under the supervision of Saeed Mortazavi, worked on the judicial part of the cases from the start. In fall of 2008, while the arrests related to Gerdbab Projects were underway, the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes was established in Tehran. Mortazavi appointed Reza Ja’fari to direct the Prosecution Office, a post in which Ja’fari remained for three years. Hojjatolislam Mohammad Mehdi Mousavi, inspector of branch 1 of this Prosecution Office, was in charge of the case files of many of the detainees. Some of the case files, such as that of Saeed Malekpour, were processed in Prosecution Office of District 21 (Ershad) where Judge Kian Manesh, who is introduced in various television programs as the inspector of general and revolutionary prosecution offices, was stationed. Another research judge by the name of Ghasem Zadeh was named by at least one prisoner as the judicial authority under whose presence and knowledge the tortures took place.

Case files of the accused were forwarded to different branches of the Revolutionary Court. Majority of the files were processed by judges Abulghasem Salavati head of branch 15 and Mohammad Moghiseh, head of branch 28. At least three of the accused (Vahid Asghari, Hassan Si Sakhti and Mehdi Alizadeh) were sentenced to execution by Salavati while one other (Saeed Malekpour) was sentenced to execution by Moghiseh.

Further, from amongst the security and judicial officials in charge of Gerdbab Project, so far Hossein Taeb, Saeed Mortazavi, Abulghasem Salavati and Mohammad Moghiseh have been placed in the list of human rights related targeted sanctions by the European Union for their role in the various severe and widespread violations of human rights in Iran. Some of them are also on the list of Iranian officials sanctioned for human rights reason by the United States. Therefore, since there is an international knowledge of their background and actions in violating human rights in Iran, we refrained from presenting a profile for them in this report.
Also, our research surrounding the fake or real identity of or other major information about some of the other officials responsible in this case, such as Gholamhossein Ramezani, Mohammad Mehdi Mousavi, Kian Manesh, Tavakkoli, Masoud and Ghasemzadeh, has not been finalized yet. Therefore, we have postponed publication of their profiles pending completion of the research.

What will be provided later is the profile of two of the officials who were directly involved in Gerdab Project. In their profile, their role in Gerdab Project, as well as their background in violating human rights, is documented in its entirety. Also, due to the importance of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC as the central organization in this project, a profile was prepared for that Center as well which is provided below.

### 3.1. Center to Investigate Organized Crime - Cyber Crime Office

![Gerdab logo](https://www.gerdab.ir)

In 2007, a new center was created in the Intelligence Office of the IRGC titled Center to Investigate Organized Crime. The responsibility of this Center, being a subset of the Revolutionary Guard Cyber Defense Command, is interference in activities that take place on the cyber space and are deemed by the IRGC to be "organized terroristic, espionage, economic or social crimes." The Center is responsible to follow the central mandate of the IRGC, as prescribed in article 150 of the Islamic Republic constitution in guarding the Islamic Republic and the political regime that came out of it. Furthermore, combating any form of "disrespect and insult to the holy tenants of the faith and revolutionary values” online, was announced as one of the reasons for launching this Center.  

The announcement also noted that this Center fully collaborates and works in conjunction with the Iranian Judiciary and other intelligence organizations. Sergeant Mohammad Sadeghi is the director of this Center; no information is available about his work experience prior to directing the Center. So far, no photograph of Sadeghi has been published and in the only televised interview with him, his voice was broadcast on an image of a computer screen, providing no image of Sadeghi himself.

Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC, with the official website of Gerdab ([www.gerdab.ir](http://www.gerdab.ir)) has severely and in a widespread manner violated human rights in at least five projects.

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30 RDCC  
31 Introducing some of the organized crimes, Gerdab, available at [http://www.gerdab.ir/fa/content/3](http://www.gerdab.ir/fa/content/3).
Cases of Violation of Human Rights

a. Gerdab (Muzillin) Project

In late summer 2008, over 90 pornographic websites were fully destroyed by Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC. At the same time, the Center arrested and detained a number of people for the crime of organizing and managing the mentioned websites.

On March 18, 2009, in an announcement published on their official website, Gerdab, the Center to Investigate Organized Crime announced: “The Intelligence forces of the IRGC have identified a number of organized anti-religion, anti-culture and anti-public chastity networks active in Persian on the internet and have annihilated them in a complex operation.”

Another part of the announcement stated that, “based on documents acquired and direct confession of the primary elements of such networks, who enjoyed the security support of foreign nations, these individuals designed and formed complex networks with the aim of advancing the goals of the enemies in parts of the soft overthrow project and so they launched a number of anti-religion and obscene and anti-revolutionary websites and used tricks to identify individuals active in this area and establish contact with them through providing technical and financial backing for them and giving them guidance and ideas.”

In the late March of 2009, names, accusations and photographs of 45 individuals who were arrested and stood accused in the Muzillin Case were published on Gerdab's website. At that time, the confessions of a group of the accused was broadcast from the Iranian national television under the name of Gerdab Documentary. In the end title of this documentary, the producers were named to be Intelligence Office of IRGC, Public Relation Office of IRGC, Judiciary, General and Public Prosecution Office of Tehran, Special Prosecution Office for Computerized Crime and Information Technology and the Center to Investigate Organized Crimes.

In the Televised confessions, the accused stated that they intended to lead the youth astray through launching pornographic websites. They claimed that their action intended to aim at the cultural basis of the IRI as well as the Islamic beliefs of the youth.

A little while later, the same confessions were re-broadcast from Channel 3 of the Iranian national television. This time, they were in a different documentary titled “Shock.”

At the time when the names and photographs of the individuals mentioned were published online and their confessions were broadcast on the television, none of them had yet been tried or convicted in court.

Less than a year after the broadcasting of their confessions from television, at least three of the accused in this case file, Saeed Malekpour, Vahid Asghari and Shahrouz Vaziri,

announced in separate letters that themselves and the others who stood accused in the case file had been subject to excruciating tortures by the interrogators of the Intelligence Office of the IRGC so that they falsely confess against themselves and others.\textsuperscript{34}

In his letter, Saeed Malekpour describes the manner of extracting televised confession as,

Another example of psychological torture involved was forcing me to perform scenarios dictated by the IRGC interrogators in front of the camera and repeatedly recording them. Although the interrogation team had promised me these films would never be aired on TV, and would only be shown to regime officials to receive a larger budget for their \textit{Gerdab} Project, I found out later on that the films were shown numerous times on state television during the time that my family was mourning my father’s death. The interrogation team, knowing that my father had passed and my family was mourning and sad, purposefully aired the footage between the third and the seventh day funeral service for my father. This resulted in severe emotional pain for my family particularly my mother. She suffered a heart attack after seeing my picture and false confessions on television. Some of the confession they forced me to make in front of camera were so ridiculous and far-fetched that they are not technically possible. For example, they asked me to falsely confess to purchasing software from the UK and then loading it on my website. I was forced to add that when somebody visited my website, the software would be, without his/her knowledge, installed on their computer and would take control of their webcam, even when their webcam was turned off! Thus, I produced films from people’s bedrooms!! Although I told the interrogator that what they were suggesting was technically impossible, they responded that I should not concern myself with such things.\textsuperscript{35}

In a complaint filed in prison against those in charge of his case file as well as the interrogator and experts of Cyber Defense Office of IRGC, Vahid Asghari writes about the routine nature of use of physical and psychological torture in the process of interrogation:

There were also blows struck to the brain, bruising and fatiguing of the body and feet, lashes, hose and baton blows, heavy slaps and punches to the head and brain and ears and my unprotected face, kicking to my feet, stomach, and head and bleeding from the gums and my hands and feet. Blows struck to the brain, bruising and fatiguing of the body and feet, lashes and baton blows took place at all hours of the day and night and happened to everyone. I was present at the scene when others were being harassed and hurt. The obstinate interrogators and experts of the Judiciary and the Cyber Defense Army of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), aside from punishments bestowed without any legal or \textit{sharia} based verdict, repeatedly spewed insults and vulgar and sexually charges curses about me, my family,

\textsuperscript{34} For more information about the manner of tortures, see translation of the letter so Saeed Malekpour, Vahid Asghari and Sharouz Vaziri in the appendix to this report.  
\textsuperscript{35} Complete translated text of Saeed Malekpour’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.
and even their own families and god, the prophet (may god protect us), and the leader.\textsuperscript{36}

Also, about the manner of preparing images for television broadcast, he writes,

For months, they illegally took me into their custody from Evin, blindfolded and handcuffed, and transport me to the torture lair of IRGC, secret code “Firm—\textit{sherkat},” at an undisclosed location that operates in an extrajudicial manner in order to achieve their goal of causing diversion in and abusing [...] the case file. They placed me in a tight and dark cupboard filled with harmful critters, dungeons, and bath tub (while hand and feet were cuffed) and placed suffocating bags that would not allow oxygen penetration over my head (exactly like the bags used in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib). They beat me harshly with wooden sticks, hung me upside down with a rope and handcuffs and slapped and lashed me. Periodically [they demanded] that I write down and sign [matters] that were their demands but untrue and unreal. Or [they demanded] that I give their censoring colleagues (IRIB) an untrue but grandiose confession. (The recorded confessions were illegally broadcasted in the program “Shock,” a special program about the IRGC from Channel One, and the news at 20:30. It also appeared on the illegal website of \textit{Gerdab} that belongs to IRGC. None of such distribution was with mine or the court’s permission and this is while no sentence has been issued for me. I still stand accused for the crimes that are fabrication of their minds and the court has not yet issued a sentence finding me guilty of the crimes).

So far, two of the three individuals who spoke of the use of torture by interrogators of the Intelligence Office of IRGC for the purpose of extracting confession have been sentence to execution by the Revolutionary Court. The third individual was sentence to 5 years of imprisonment and exile to the city of Gorgan.

Once Saeed Malekpour’s execution order was finalized, in an announcement published on January 29, 2012, the Center to Investigate Organized Crime of IRGC expressed its malcontent on why Malekpour has not yet been penalized although three years had passed since his arrest and thanked the judiciary for finalizing his verdict.\textsuperscript{37} Another part of the announcement clearly point to the direct role of the Center in the issuing of the execution verdict for Malekpour and their pursuing of the verdict to ensure it is upheld:

Through serious pursuing of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC, now and after months of compressed and exhausting legal action, the execution verdict of the director of the largest Persian network of obscene websites was upheld by the Supreme Court.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} Complete translated text of Vahid Asghari’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.
\textsuperscript{38} Id.
Two days later, the website of the Center published another report that stated that they have been receiving messages from the public demanding the speedy execution of Malekpour.39

b. Suppression of Protestors after the Election (Deep Sedition Project)

On July 6, 2009, Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC published its first round of photographs taken of individuals who participated in the post-2009 presidential election unrest and asked internet users to inform the Center of any information they might have of the individuals in the photos so that they could be identified and arrested.40 Publication of photographs continued for months, in particular after each protesting gatherings; Gerdab website was used as a tool to spy and gather information on the protesters. In some pages that are still available on Gerdab’s website, some of the photographs bear a written water mark saying “identified.” This means that the protestor photographed had been identified and arrested by the forced of the Center or their collaborators in other security organizations. (See Image below) In an interview, Sadeghi, director of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime said, “By publishing the photos of the rioters, the Center took control of the [cyber] space. After this act, fewer disruptions took place on the internet and also, invaluable information about the accused was given to the Center by internet users... [leading to the] identifying of a number of major and guiding elements of the riots who spread lies online and insulted people as well as attempted to invite individuals to participate in gatherings.”41

The activity of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime in identifying and arresting the protestors of the post 2009 election was not limited to those participating in the street protests but also expanded to cyber activists.

41 Interesting Conversation with the Director of Center for Investigating Organized Crime, Rajaab, available at http://rajaab.blogfa.com/post/64.
In January 2010, a post titled “Arresting a Number of Main Directors of the Deep Sedition in Cyber Space” appeared on Gerdab website. The post announced that the Center has identified and arrested cyber activists who were involved in the post-2009 election events. Alireza A., Mechanical Engineering Student at Tehran University, is one of the five individuals named. According to the post, he stood accused of publishing a call-to-action for an illegal gathering in front of the Majlis building, sending and publishing emails containing announcements [of presumably the opposition leaders] and other inciting material, internet content insulting Islam and the leader, forming the green weblog movement and publishing of caricatures and other ridiculing material about the president.42

c. Iran Proxy (Woodpecker Project)

In fall 2009 a number of cyber activists were arrested by agents of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC and transferred to ward 2A of Evin Prison, a separate detention center inside Evin Prison complex in complete control of the IRGC.

One cyber activist and weblogger who had started his activity during the post-2009 election unrest, was arrested in November 2009 and spent over 40 days in solitary cell at ward 2A of Evin Prison. About the interrogations and pressures he was subject to after his arrest, he says,

On the second floor of ward 2A there were 5-6 rooms and in each room at least 2 interrogators. There was a chair that you sat on, facing the wall with your back to them. They would start speaking: “What business did you have with the Zionists?” “How did you get connected to the Zionist-American site of twitter?” For example, they told me to draw the central nucleus of Facebook for them on a piece of paper. I explained to them that the way it worked was I would become friend with someone and then he or she can see me. The end was very interesting; they told me that if I don’t write what they want me to write, they had my handwriting exposing the central nucleus of Facebook [and they would use it]... their goal was to extract confession from me that I had enmity with the regime, that because I was on Facebook and Twitter I was in contact with the spying Zionist and American organizations, that I was anti-revolutionary and ... Once they said: “Do you think that if you family decided to travel and an accident happens, anyone would say anything about it? It will be just an accident, nothing special!” When they said this I got really scared. They were right; they could stage an accident and kill my family...43

Another individual caught in the wave of arrest was Hossein Ronaghi Maleki who was arrested on December 13, 2009. Maleki wrote in his weblog under the pseudonym Babak Khorramdin. He was also skilled in crossing filters, programming and creating weblogs and worked extensively to remove censorship from the Iranian cyber space. One of his major

43 For Security reasons, name and identifying information about this witness is confidential at Justice for Iran.
accusations was launching the website of “Iran Proxy” in which different methods of accessing the websites filtered by the IRI was provided to the internet users.

About “Iran Proxy,” Gerdab offers the following explanations: “In 2006 and as part of project “destabilizing Iran” prepared by CIA with the 400 million dollar budget dedicated to it by the American congress that became operational by order of Bush, launching a new method of “Intelligence War” known and cyber war was placed in the agenda of the USA. This project gained a lot of attention through use of agents of anti-revolutionary grouplets such as the Munafiqin—Mojahedin-e Khalaq, royalists and some other groups. In pursuing this course, founding a network called Iran Proxy was one of the most important actions to take place in that year with the 50 million dollar budget given by CIA and under the support of the IBB office of the US Foreign Affairs Office.

Extracting data from the information data bank of Iran, infiltrating and sabotaging the Iranian internet sites, combating filtering inside the country, providing security for cyber space users against the IRI, creating a secure telephone and data access for interviews with Radio Farda, Radio Zamaneh, Voice of America TV, and other western media was amongst the missions of the Iran Proxy network.”

In a press conference, Sadeghi, director of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime, announced that the Cyber Defense Office of the IRGC has destroyed this network whose most significant task was to provide a secure connection for individuals who wished to speak with Radio and Television stations outside of Iran such as Radio Zamaneh, Radio Farda, and VOA-TV. He also alleged that the directors of Iran Proxy received salary from the CIA.

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, was one of the accused in this case. He was active in programming software that would allow circumventing of the widespread filtering of Internet websites by the Iranian government. Since the time of his arrest, Maleki, has gone through a number of cycles during which he is placed under heavy pressure to confess to crimes on the television. For this reason, he has gone on hunger strikes a number of times. In a letter to the Prosecutor of Tehran, Ahmad Ronaghi Maleki, Father of Hossein, says, “My son Hossein Ronaghi Maleki has spent 13 months in solitary cells at Evin Prison under the tortures of the interrogators and this has caused both his kidneys, his gall bladder and his health to fail.”

Under such conditions, in a letter to the Prosecutor of Tehran, Hossein Ronaghi Maleki quoted the prosecutor’s words to him regarding how the Intelligence Office of IRGC was preventing Maleki’s access to medical care in order to treat the side effects of his torture. He wrote,

Mr. Dowlatabadi, do you remember when I spoke to you about my deplorable physical condition due to the two kidney operations and having gall bladder stone as well as Angina Pectoris and broken teeth, a gift of the interrogators. Remember that I emphasized how in spite of the warnings of the specialist physician at Hashemi Nejad hospital, the insistence of Dr.

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Rezvani, the Head of Medical Examiner Office of West of Tehran in letter No. 16820 dated May, 11, 2011, for my leave from prison in order to continue my treatment in an environment outside of prison and also the repeated insistences of the medical examiner September 26, 2011 and November 26, 2011 in the same regard, I was again returned to prison... And what did to say to me in return? You only responded that due to the disagreement of IRGC you cannot sent me on a furlough. Do you recall that in meetings prior you had told me that if the Medical Examiner agrees with my need to go to furlough, you will send me on furlough. After you said such, I looked into it and realized that three months prior to you telling me such, the Medical Examiner had announced its agreement with my furlough and had sent you a copy of it too. At that moment I told you that the security agencies are the ones deciding on who gets treatment and how.45

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki has been sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment for the crimes of membership in Iran Proxy, insulting the leader and insulting the president.

d. Suppression of Human Rights Activists Society (Mersad Project)

In March 2010, a number of human rights activist from all over Iran who all collaborated with an organization named Human Rights Activists Society were arrested by Center to Investigate Organized Crime. Ja’fari Dowlatabadi announced their number to be 30. Vahid Ahmad Fakhreddin, attorney at law, is one of those arrested. He was kept in Ward 2A of Evin Prison and in his testimony, he says,

Continuously at midnight, they would come and drag me blindfolded to be interrogated. They even dragged me out of a bath to go for interrogation. They dragged me and told me that they wanted to execute me. Many issues would come up such as rape and harassment I was there for fifty days. Then they came and told me to give a guarantee that I would not do any more human rights work. They asked me to commit to working for them; [commit that] if they wanted an article or an interview from me about human rights, I’d do it for them. They asked that I appear on a television show and say that I was connected to Israel and USA and then give a guarantee not to do anymore human rights work and instead do what they tell me to.46

In March 2010, Iranian national television broadcast a movie parts of which included private photographs of Ahmad Fakhreddin in parties and ceremonies outside of the country. The photographs were taken from the hard drive of Ahmad Fakhreddin’s computer that was confiscated upon his arrest. The movie accused the Human Rights Activists Society, including Ahmad Fakhreddin, to have contact with the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization and to pursue the progress of that organization’s goals while portraying it as human rights activity. The film also accused the Society to have published a false list of those who were killed during

46 Witness Testimony of Vahid Ahmad Fakhreddin, Justice for Iran.
the post-2009 election unrest as well as collecting intelligence on Iranian nuclear scientists. A version of this video titled Cyber War on Iran was broadcast from Press TV channel.

Subsequently, in an interview broadcast from Iranian national television, Sadeghi, Technical and Cyber Deputy of the Intelligence Office of IRGC (Head of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime) announced that the forces under his directorship had been keeping tap on the Human Rights Activists Society and have thus discovered the Society’s relationship with Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization as well as their publication of false lists of individuals killed in post-2009 election unrest. It was then announced that the Human Right Activists network had been demolished by the cyber defendants of the Islamic Republic.

About the effects of such broadcastings on his life, Vahid Ahmad Fakhreddin testifies, “All the problems that happened to me effectively stemmed from the movie that was broadcast from the channel 2 of Iranian television and Press TV. They had taken personal photos of me from my laptop and showed them in the movie. I was dancing, or sitting on a table and there were alcoholic beverages around. In the film they clearly said that these people are spies and collaborate with the Munafiqin and are in contact with USA and with Israel. Their efforts were basically to show that everyone who does human rights work is a gigolo, a womanizer, drinks alcoholic beverages, travels to foreign countries while their expenses are paid by others and basically that human rights is a cover for the American and Israeli spying organizations so that they can hide under human rights issues and continue to gather support and stage an over throw, soft over throw, media and cyber war and ... the movie that was broadcast had a strong effect on my family life, social life and my job. When I was released, my father would not come to see me; my one sister’s husband would never come to our house; the other sister’s suitor ran off! Our neighbor would not respond my greetings; at court, I was always facing problems with my case files. Many of the judges voted in disfavor of me and would tell my attorneys that they made a bad decision when they chose to represent me. One time I asked a girl for her hand in marriage and when she found [out about the story] she rejected me... I was crushed and had to escape the country!”

47 id.


e. Filtering of Internet Websites

Another permanent project of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime is controlling the content of websites on the internet. The Center does this by asking internet user to alert the Center if they were to encounter a website the content of which can be constituted as criminal based on the definitions provided by Gerdab. The transgressing website and those responsible for it will then be pursued and legally dealt with, in addition to websites with pornographic content, websites that advertise for doctrines or faiths such as the Baha’i faith or Sufism, as well as sites that publish material against officials or organizations of the Islamic Republic or display content regarding ethnic discrimination are amongst the website that the Center for Computerized Crimes will look into and legally pursue the individual responsible for. Also amongst such websites are any that publishes information on how to access filtered sites and circumvent the filtering; individuals who own websites that re-posts the content of filtered sites will also be legally pursued.
3.2. Mohammad Sadeghi

Biography

No information is available about the birth and professional background of Sergeant Mohammad Sadeghi. His first presence on the scene was through interviews he conducted in 2008 as the director of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime. Media do not have permission to publish his photo and even in the exclusive interview of Iranian national television Channel 2, only his voice was broadcasted. Extensive measures have been taken to keep information about the Center confidential as even the building housing the Center to Investigate Organized Crime is unmarked and in an unclear location.

Responsibilities

2009 to present: Technical and Cyber Deputy of the Intelligence Office of IRGC

2007 to present: Responsible for the Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC

Cases of Human Rights Violation

As the director of Center to Investigate Organized Crime of the IRGC, Sergeant Mohammad Sadeghi is responsible for all the violations of human rights that occurred in the different projects of this center against the cyber activists. The projects were explained in detail in section 3.1. Furthermore, Sadeghi and his deputy Mohammadi Nia, are the only two individuals who have so far spoken on behalf of the Center with the media or have given speeches or produced written material about the actions of the Center.

For example, in an interview with Panjereh—Window publication, Sadeghi admits that one of the important works of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime is to hack websites that produce criminal content, as per the definition of that by the IRGC.

In that interview, Sadeghi alludes to the intervention of IRGC and the Center in Gerdab Project, affirms that the Pornographic websites have been hacked by the IRGC and destroyed and then said, “IRGC has gathered all its might to enter this field; the bulk of the work surrounding entry into this field is on the shoulders of Center to Investigate Organized Crime. We have created case files for the major activists in this field by identifying them. We even dragged some of them into the country from outside under false agreements. All such individuals have been interrogated and the necessary information has been acquired. Some have had a sentenced issued for them and others are awaiting their sentences.”

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50 This program can be viewed on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_8Esx3vyBw&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_8Esx3vyBw&feature=related).

In this interview, Mohammad Sadeghi clarifies the way in which the Center uses Gerdab website as a tool for creating an unofficial spying network. For example, he speaks of the manner in which they use the website to acquire knowledge about the political activity of Iranian citizens outside of Iran, who have used their right to free speech and freedom of assembly and intended to return to Iran. He says,

On Gerdab website, we receive hundreds of report on a daily basis. Whatever you can imagine is reported to us, from economic matters to political, cultural, security and social issued. [We receive] things about people who others are suspicious of or individuals who had been viewed at protests in, for example, Stockholm who are now entering the country.\(^{52}\)

In a post published on Gerdab website, Sergeant Mohammad Sadeghi personally announces that five of the cyber activists who were involved in the post-2009 election unrest have been identified and arrested. In the post, Sadeghi provides the first names and last initials of the five as well as their charges.\(^{53}\)

As an example, he provides “launching and managing websites against national security, providing information about the place of gathering of the rioters and the slogans chanted, creating filter-breakers to enter filtered websites, inviting people to form illegal gatherings and cause riots and disruption,” as part of the charges against two brothers, Hassan and Ali B.

Another individual arrested named Omid L. was a 22 year old computer engineer who, according to Mohammad Sadeghi, is accused of inviting people to form illegal gatherings through sending 30 thousand internet messages as well as sending mass emails regarding the rigging of the election. He was also accused of receiving money from individuals in charge of Mir Hossein Mousavi’s campaign office.

According to Mohammad Sadeghi, another cyber activist named Amir A., electrical engineer, was arrested at his place of work. His charges include creating “nucleus of silence of the greens,” and sending call-to-action to internet users for causing disruption in the electricity system of Iran.\(^{54}\)

In his appearance at a television show on March 2010, Sergeants Mohammad Sadeghi, counts the arrest of the members of Human Rights Activists Society and other cyber activists who worked on providing access to filtered websites to the Internet users as part of the accomplishments of the center under his directorship. In the television show, he is introduced as the “Technical and Cyber Deputy of the IRGC.”

This interview was Sadeghi’s only television presence to date. The other two guests on the show were Abbas Ja’fari Dowlatabadi, Prosecutor of Tehran, and Reza Seraj, director of the University Basij who is introduced as “political expert” on the show. While the other two

\(^{52}\) Id.


\(^{54}\) Id.
guests were present in the studio, Sadeghi’s voice is broadcast over an image of a computer monitor.

On this television show, Sergeant Mohammad Sadeghi introduces both Human Rights Activists Society and Iran Proxy network as two networks engaged in America’s cyber war against Iran that have been “destroyed” by forces under his command.

3.3. Reza Ja’fari

Biography

Born in 1967, Reza Ja’fari has a masters’ degree in Criminal Law and Criminology.

Responsibilities

November 2012 to present: Working at the Disciplinary Court of Judges - position unclear.

November 2007 to November 2011: Director of Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes (District 13); Disciplinary Court of Judges; Director of inspection of the Office of Justice of Ardebil Province; Judicial Deputy of the Office of Justice of Ardebil Province;

July 2003 to January 2005: General and Revolutionary Prosecutor of Ardebil; Chief officer of the Human Resources of the Judiciary.

Cases of Human Rights Violation

In fall 2007, Saeed Mortazavi, General and Revolutionary Prosecutor of Tehran established the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes and appointed Reza Ja’fari as its first director. Ja’fari remained on that post for another four years. Establishing the Special Prosecution Office coincided with mass arrests of individuals accused of launching, managing and producing pornographic web content (Gerdab Project) by the Intelligence Office of IRGC. Upon establishing, the Special Prosecution Office immediately took over the judicial aspects of Gerdab Project. This included issuing temporary detention orders and extending them for months after initial detention, interrogate and research the accused and issuing an indictment for them.

Although IRGC never announced the complete number of individuals arrested in relation to Gerdab Project, some sources give their number to be higher than 65 people. In a televised
interview, Reza Ja’fari gave the number of those detained to be over 50 people.\textsuperscript{55} Based on what is reported on \textit{Gerdab}, eventually indictments were issued for 45 individuals by the inspectors of the Special Prosecution Office under the supervision of Ja’fari. It has been reported that the indictment of at least 7 of those individuals requested maximum punishment (execution) for the individual.

One of the administrators of \textit{Avizoon} and \textit{XPersian} websites was arrested during \textit{Gerdab} Project but later released because no document was discovered to criminalize him. About the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes, he says, “During my detention period I was twice taken from ward 2A to Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes. First time I was taken to the second floor of the Prosecution Office. There was a room with two rows of computers in it and people working behind the computers. In each row there were 7-8 computers. Our website had been down but they showed me pages from the archive of our website and asked to tell them the real names of the individuals who were participating in the conversation.”\textsuperscript{56} During his interrogations, he was subject to psychological pressure, threats, and beatings to reveal the names of the mentioned individuals.

Based on written testimony of a number of prisoners arrested in relation to \textit{Gerdab} Project, judicial authorities working at the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes repeatedly violated the principle of fair trial. For example, temporary detention warrants for some of the detainees were extended by the office for months and even years after the detainees’ arrest. Also, the inspectors of that office, in particular Mohammad Mehdi Mousavi, inspector of Branch 1 of this Prosecution Office that investigated many of the case files, refused to change the detention order to “release on bail” in spite of the repeated requests made by the detainees and their family. Some of the prisoners claim that the inspector working on their case was present during their tortures and extraction of force confessions.

One of those accused in this case, Vahid Asghari, complained of Mohammad Mehdi Mousavi as the inspector for having collaborated with the tortures and ordering them.\textsuperscript{57} However, the complaint did not result in any actions. In his letter, another individual accused in this case, Saeed Malekpour, writes, “During my temporary detention, particularly in the first months, I was subject to various forms of physical and psychological torture by the Cyber Defense Office of the IRGC. Some of the tortures were performed in the presence of Mr. Moussavi, the inspector in the case. A large portion of my confession was extracted under pressure, physical and psychological torture, threats to me and my family, and false promises of immediate release upon giving a false confession based on whatever the interrogators dictated. I have to add that the confession in front of the inspector was extracted in the presence of interrogators. To prevent me from informing the inspector that

\textsuperscript{55} Sock documentary is available on YouTube at \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meNAp1qxEpA&feature=related}.\textsuperscript{56} For Security reasons, name and identifying information about this witness is confidential at Justice for Iran.\textsuperscript{57} Complete translated text of Vahid Asghari’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.
my confession was given under pressure, the interrogators threatened that the torture would worsen."\(^{58}\)

The judicial authorities under directorship of Reza Ja’fari were not the only ones violating the rights of the accused. In multiple interviews that were broadcast from Iranian national television in late March 2009, along with explaining the actions of the Special Prosecution Office, Ja’fari himself announced that he has requested the maximum punishment for the managers of pornographic websites as they are corrupts on earth,

A person who is managing a large number of sites, is in contact with 250 obscene and amoral websites in the world, promotes illicit acts and incest there, promotes sinful actions with children, bestiality and such, insults what is deemed holy in our faith, insults our prophet and other holy prophets, questions the mourning processions, and spews what he deserves upon our holy relics, if he cannot be called “corrupt on earth,” then nothing in the world can be titled as such. When we identify what the issue [crime] is, naturally the sentence for it is clear as well. The sentence and punishment for being a corrupt on earth is execution... Our request is exactly that. I mean that if such punishment cannot be issued for these people, then certainly there is a problem with either our work or our law. Naturally, we are pursuing their work... We will show no mercy in dealing with them because they invaded the personal space of people and played with people’s beliefs and made efforts for promotion of corruption on earth in the society.\(^{39}\)

Presently, it is reported that seven individuals accused in the aforementioned case file have been sentenced to execution for that same charge—being corrupts on earth.\(^{60}\) We were able to ascertain the issuance of execution order based on the indictment for five of the individuals. At the time of publishing of this report, three of those sentences were upheld by the Supreme Court. However, the other two individuals with execution order continue to remain unknown.

Also, in a televised interview broadcast on April 19, 2009, Ja’fari said, “All the accused confessed to having contacts with the foreign agents and they even received money and checks from the foreign elements which are documented and present in their case file. Furthermore, they had conversations and correspondence with foreign agents through internet; that is also kept in their file as evidence.”\(^{61}\) In the interview, Ja’fari made it clear that those accused in this case will be dealt with without any mercy.\(^{62}\)

\(^{58}\) Complete translated text of Saeed Malekpour’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.

\(^{59}\) Sock documentary is available on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meNAP1qxEpA&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meNAP1qxEpA&feature=related).

\(^{60}\) Names of five of them are known: Ahmadreza Hashempour, Saeed Malekpour, Vahid Asghari, Vahid Alizadeh and Hassan Si Sakhti. However, names of the other two have remained unknown in spite of our efforts.


\(^{62}\) Id.
In his letter of complaint, Vahid Asghari, one of the accused, writes that he was forced, under severe tortures, to falsely confess to receiving 1000 to 3000 dollars on a monthly basis from the American government for the purpose of soft overthrow. He writes, “I was accused of insulting the Imam’s, insulting the leader, and causing confusion amongst the masses in my interrogations because I received, without my control and by accident, ridiculing images of the leader and the heads of the regime and the Shi’ite Imams. I had no hand in receiving those emails. They accused me of obtaining unacceptable property, under the sharia law, because I was a Google strategist and used Google advertisements and received money from Google, technologically the greatest search engine. Such accusations are laughable! They do not have any illegal activities and are merely a business. They insist that I am a member of the Munafiqin, active in their cultural branch. This is my largest false accusation while I had and have no contact with them, never met any of them and have no understanding of them.”63

Upon the passing of Law of Computerized Crimes in July 2009, as per the responsibility delegated to them by this law, the Prosecution Office of Iran assigned a working group to decide on the definition of crime online and in the websites. On January 31, 2010, the working group passed a list of content that is constituted criminal by the Islamic Republic on the internet.64 Based on the list, over 40 criminal acts on the cyber space have been defined which include creating content against public moral and chastity, Islamic sanctities, officials and governmental and public organs as well as content against national security. This includes actions such as creating a group or gathering on the cyber space with the intention of disrupting national security, creating content that damages the foundation of the Islamic Republic, publishing content against the principles of the Constitution, propagating against the regime of Islamic Republic, disrupting national unity and causing disagreement amongst the various groups within the society particularly through discussing ethnic and racial issues, propaganda to benefit the groups and organizations opposing the Islamic Republic, and insulting and mocking the officials, governmental or regime organizations and establishment.

As an example, the list considers publishing filter-breakers and teaching how to circumvent the filtering, re-publishing and linking to other criminal content of websites as well as blocked internet sites, shut down publications and media connected to wayward and illegal groups and movements as examples of creating content against national security, officials and governmental organizations.

Pursuant to the passing of this list, Reza Ja’fari announced that the Prosecution Office under his control is observing the content of websites using advance tools and software so that he can execute the law.65 In this interview, he considered the lack of access to adequate software and equipments as reason for the government not dealing with websites that, in the aftermath of the 2009 election, were publishing what Ja’fari called “false news.”

63 Complete translated text of Vahid Asghari’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.
64 Complete text of this passing is available in Persian on the website of the Cyber Police at http://www.cyberpolice.ir/page/2551.
4. Legal Analysis of the Human Rights Violations Occurring in the Process of Geradab Project

A simple look into Geradab Project will undoubtedly highlight countless instances of violation of international human rights law. However, in the section that follows, only the instances of violation of the Islamic Republic’s law are discussed. This analysis demonstrates the breadth of violations occurred by the security and judicial officers of the Islamic Republic, violating laws that they are duty bound to execute and protect.

4.1. Presumption of Innocence

The constitution of the IRI recognizes the principle of presumption of innocence. According to article 37 of the Islamic Republic’s constitution: “Innocence is the basic principle. No person is considered legally guilty, except in cases where his guilt is established in a competent court.”

Section 2 of the Respecting Legitimate Freedoms and Protecting Citizens’ Rights Law also prescribes:

Until such time as the crime has been established in a court of law and a verdict that is based on sound arguments and supported by legal evidence or based on sources of religious jurisprudence (in the event that legal evidence is not available), the defendant is presumed innocent.

It is based on this principle that publishing the detail of a case file, mentioning name or other identifying detail such as the accused’s social or employment status, prior to the finalizing of the verdict, is forbidden. If a media commits such an act, it has committed libel (Note 1 of Article 188 of the Criminal Procedure Code), a crime that carries up to one year of imprisonment for the managing director and reporter of that media.66

This is while in the case of Geradab Project, the televised confessions of the accused were broadcast from Iranian national television in mid March of 2009 for the first time. Although their eyes were bound, identifying the accused by those who know him from the rest of the face as well as their voice is entirely possible. Also, shortly after the broadcasting of the confessions, the official website of Center to Investigate Organized Crime (gredab.ir) published the photos of the accused along with his first name and last initial as well as details such as his education, profession, and place of residence. Some of the accused resided in small cities which makes their identification by the locals much more likely.

Saeed Malekpour, one of the victims, wrote in his letter about the effects of broadcasting the confessions on his family,

66 Article 697 of the Islamic Penal Code prescribes: “Anyone who through any printed press or any other media falsely accuses someone of an offense or crime should be sentenced to imprisonment from one month to one year or flogging up to 74 lashes (unless the punishment is otherwise specified in hadd).”
Although the interrogation team had promised me these films would never be aired on TV, and would only be shown to regime officials to receive a larger budget for their *Gerdab Project*, I found out later on that the films were shown numerous times on state television during the time that my family was mourning my father’s death. The interrogation team, knowing that my father had passed and my family was mourning and sad, purposefully aired the footage between the third and the seventh day funeral service for my father. This resulted in severe emotional pain for my family particularly my mother. She suffered a heart attack after seeing my picture and false confessions on television.\(^{67}\)

The image above is a screen shot from one of the pages of *Gerdab* Website showing the published photographs and identifying information of the accused on April 11, 2009.\(^{68}\)

When the videos and photographs and other information about the accused in *Gerdab* Project were being broadcast on Iranian national television and published on the website of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime, none of the accused had yet been tried or convicted in a court of law. Therefore, publishing the photos and identifying information of 45 individual accused in *Gerdab* Project is a clear case of violation of the principle of presumption of innocence as stated in article 37 of the Constitution as well as article 188 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

### 4.2. Illegality of Arbitrary Arrest

Article 32 of the Islamic Republic Constitution states, “No person may be arrested except according to and in the manner laid down in the law. If someone is detained, the subject matter of the charge, with reasons (for bringing it), must immediately be communicated and explained in writing to the accused. Within at most 24 hours the file on the case and

\(^{67}\) Complete translated text of Saeed Malekpour’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.

preliminary documentation must be referred to the competent legal authority. Legal procedures must be initiated as early as possible. Anyone infringing this principle will be punished in accordance with the law.”

Criminal Code of Procedure of the Public and Revolutionary Courts, the Amending Law to the Law of Formation of General and Revolutionary Courts, as well as the Respecting Legitimate Freedoms and Protecting Citizens’ Rights Law have together determined the manner of execution of this article. Based on the above mentioned bodies of law, other than in case of an evident crime, no one can be arrested without a judicial warrant (written by a judicial official such as the prosecutor or the inspector with agreement from the prosecutor). In cases where the arrest takes place due to an evident crime, the judicial agents (police agents or security officers) are duty bound to obtain agreement from the judicial officials regarding the continuation of the arrested individual’s detention or his release within 24 hours from the time of arrest. Detention warrants must be reasoned and with documents backing up the decision. Also, the accused has the right to, within prescribed periods of time, protest the detention warrant. Even if the accused does not file a complaint against his continued detention, the judicial body in charge must release the individual within a month unless there are clear reasons why his detention should be extended.

Based on what is written in Saeed Malekpour’s letter, agents who arrested him did not have an arrest warrant and his arrest more resembled a kidnapping than a legal operation. His wife later testified that the family did not have any news of his whereabouts for months. In his letter, Malekpour writes,

I, Saeed Malekpour, was arrested on October 4th, 2008, near Vanak Square [in northern Tehran] by plainclothes agents who did not present an arrest warrant or identification cards. The arrest resembled abduction since no arrest warrants or ID cards were presented. Afterwards, I was handcuffed, blindfolded and placed at the back of an unmarked Sedan. A heavy-set agent leaned his weight on me by positioning his elbow on my neck, forcing my head down throughout the ride. They transferred me to an undisclosed location which they called the “Technical Office.”

Another weblogger was arrested in the same manner. In his testimony, he says,

One of them took a gun from his belt, just like in the movies, and placed it on my head. He said, let it go or I’ll shoot! Under such conditions, what can a person do? One can’t even ask where he is being taken, or request to see their ID cards. They blindfolded me and laid me down on the floor of the car.

As described, under Iranian law, temporary detention is a judicial arrangement that is supposed to be short term. However, majority of those who were accused in the Gerdab Project have experienced long periods in temporary detention, a significant portion of which

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69 Complete translated text of Saeed Malekpour’s letter can be found in the appendix to this report.
70 For Security reasons, name and identifying information about this witness is confidential at Justice for Iran.
was spent in solitary confinement. For some, in spite of their repeated complaints, the temporary detention warrant was never changed to release on bail.

For example, Vahid Asghari spent over three and half years in temporary detention before his first sentence of execution was handed down in January 2012. Asghari, still in prison at the time of publication of this report, spent the first 16 months of his temporary detention in solitary confinement. Saeed Malekpour also spent the first year of his temporary detention in a solitary cell the contents of which included a copy of the Koran, a bottle of water, three blankets and a mohr—prayer rock.

### 4.3. Principle of Ban of Torture

Article 38 of the constitution entirely bans torture: “Any kind of torture used to extract an admission of guilt or to obtain information is forbidden. Compelling people to give evidence, or confess or take an oath is not allowed. Such evidence or confession or oath is null and void. Any person infringing this principle is to be punished in accordance with the law.” There has been extensive measures prescribed in other bodies of law in order to ban torture as well as guarantees offered to prosecute torturers. Respecting Legitimate Freedoms and Protecting Citizens’ Rights Law also bans any form of harassment of the accused such as blindfolding and tying their hands and feet, belittling and demeaning them, covering of the face or sitting behind the accused and other such actions as well as torture. However, at least three individuals accused in the Gerdab Project reported severe and systematic torture inflicted upon them and others accused in the case. Based on these reports, the tortures inflicted were with the aim of extracting confessions and in particular televised confession from the accused. Vahid Asghari, one of the individuals reporting the tortures, has filed a complaint against the interrogators and experts of the Cyber Defense Office of IRGC as well as the judicial authorities of his case file. The other two have announced that they are willing to testify in court about the infliction of corporal and mental tortures with the aim of extracting “dictated” confessions.71

Meanwhile, the same confessions extracted through torture comprises majority of the documents and evidences against the accused. In most cases, the judges have approved the veracity of these confessions and issued their verdicts of guilty based on them.

Based on the narratives acquired from those detained for Gerdab Project and other cyber activists who have been detained in similar cases, instances of mistreatment and torture was routinely inflicted upon the detainees. Some instances of that are: using foul and insulting language, use of sexually charged insults directed at the prisoner or his family, and group beating of the prisoner with baton, hose, lash or hands on the stomach and other body parts. Both Vahid Aghari and Saeed Malekpour spoke of threats of rape using a bottle or a tube of glue. The prisoners were threatened with murder with brass knuckles and knives while forced to wear a blind fold everywhere other than inside of their cells. They were threatened that if they refuse to confess, members of their family will be arrested and tortured. In his complaint, Vahid Aghari announced that both her brothers, one living in Iran and the other a refugee in Turkey, were harassed and threatened.

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71 A copy of Vahid Asghari’s complaint is available in the appendix to this report.
Based on reliable information gathered from former prisoners who were detained by the Intelligence Office of the IRGC, there are very small and dark cells in the basement of the interrogations building of Ward 2A that is separated from the ward with a courtyard. The cells, described by prisoners as “grave-like” and “akin to a closet,” are small enough that, while seated, the prisoner can touch the ceiling. Some prisoners have testified that these cells are used as the last resort to extract forced confessions.

In his letter of complaint, Vahid Asghari writes about those cells,

They placed me in a tight and dark cupboard filled with harmful critters, dungeons, and bath tub (while hand and feet were cuffed) and placed suffocating bags that would not allow oxygen penetration over my head (exactly like the bags used in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib).

A political prisoner, who was in the same ward as Saeed Malekpour for some time, says that Malekpour told him that he was taken to these cells to be forced to give confession. He said that he was taken to the basement of ward 2A and placed inside a cell that was as big as a grave. He was then abandoned with an IV in his hand. No one so much as knocked on his cell door until he agreed to heed the demands of the interrogators and “confess.”

As explained in his complaint letter and affirmed by his family repeatedly, Vahid Asghari has lost his mental balance due to the severity of the tortures inflicted upon him. Based on the report of a human rights organization, Asghari, who is currently being held at ward 350 of Evin Prison, was sent to Razi Insane Asylum (Amir Abad) for a period of two weeks to receive treatments.

4.4. Right to a Fair Trial

The Iranian bodies of law mostly respect and uphold the principles of fair trial such as the right to retain an attorney, the right to obtain opinion of an independent expert, and the right to an appeal. In spite of this, we will discuss below how all of the above principles have been violated or disregarded in the Gerdab Project.

Right to Retain an Attorney

Article 35 of the Constitution states, “In all courts, both parties to the claim are entitled to select a lawyer for themselves. If they do not have the capacity to do this, the means of a lawyer being appointed to act for them must be made available to them.” The Criminal Code of Procedure for General and Revolutionary Courts significantly limits this right in the case of political trials. Furthermore, article 128 of this law gives the accused the right to retain an attorney in the preliminary investigation stages but does not permit the attorney to

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72 For Security reasons, name and identifying information about this witness is confidential at Justice for Iran.
Gerdab; a Dictated Scenario

interfere with the investigation or attempt a defense. Instead, the attorney can “without interfering in the process of research, after the investigation comes to a close, alert the judge of matters that he deems necessary for discovery of truth, defending the accused or executing the law.” If the case file is about a crime against national security, the inspector of assistant prosecutor can bar the attorney from being present in the preliminary investigation phase. Either way, when the preliminary investigation comes to a close and the case file is sent to the court so that a session can be convened, the attorney has the right to interfere and participate in the trial.

In action, however, the officials of the prosecution office did not allow the attorneys of any of the accused in Gerdab Project to be present in the preliminary investigation phase. In doing so, they abused the authority given to them by Article 128 and even prevented any visitation to take place between the accused and their attorney prior to the convening of the trial sessions.

Saeed Malekpour met his attorney for the first time during his first trial session. After their initial encounter, Malekpour was only permitted to meet with his attorney 2 or 3 times. Vahid Asghari had never been allowed to meet with his attorneys and even when they met in the court session they were not allowed to speak to one another.

Article 185 of the Criminal Code of Procedure of the General and Revolutionary Courts deems retaining an attorney necessary for individuals who are accused of crimes that carry punishment of execution or life imprisonment. However, it appears that in the case of individuals accused in Gerdab Project, the court only allowed the attorneys of the accused to be present at court so that a semblance of respecting due process was retained. Meanwhile, the attorneys were not given the necessary authority to prepare a proper defense.

Right to Obtain the Opinion of an Independent Expert

Article 257 of the Civil Procedure Code of the General and Revolutionary Courts recognizes the right of the accused to request the opinion of an independent expert. However, none of the requests made by the accused in Gerdab Project for an independent expert to inspect their case have been accepted by the Revolutionary Courts. Since the entirety of the case files are surrounding activities in the virtual world, the accused and their attorneys, as well as their family members, have repeatedly stressed on the need of an independent IT expert to examine the documents and issue opinion based on which the court should issue a verdict. In its reasons for rejecting to uphold the execution verdict of Saeed Malekpour, branch 32 of the Supreme Court had pointed out the absence of an approval from an independent expert. The Branch had specifically asked the lower court to acquire the opinion of an independent judiciary expert on whether or not Siavash Hossein Khani, owner of the pornographic website Avizoon, was really an alias for Saeed Malekpour. The expert would have issued his opinion after inspecting the IP addresses of the Hossein Khani and Malekpour, Avizoon’s logs, and looking into the emails and other details of Malekpour’s activities on cyber space. However, Mohammad Moghiseh, the Judge of branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court, never permitted an independent technical expert to examine the documents of the case file. Instead, he deemed the opinion of the experts at Center to
Investigate Organized Crime to be sufficient in determining that Siavash Hossein Khani is one and the same with Saeed Malekpour and reissued the execution verdict. Oddly and without any complaints, the Supreme Court upheld the decision the second time around.

Judge of branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court, Abulgahsem Salavati, also dismissed the requests of Vahid Asghari regarding obtaining the opinions of an independent technical expert. In issuing his execution verdict for Asghari, Salavati solely relied on the opinion of the interrogators--who are called “expert” in the text of the judgment.

In effect, the *Gerdab* Project violated one of the most fundamental principles of fair trial which is to distinguish between interrogators and independent expert.

**Right to Appeal**

The Iranian body of law recognizes the right to one round of appeal to the accused. However, in case of crimes where the punishment is severe, such as execution, the case file is directly sent to the Supreme Court after the judgment of the lower court is issued. Based on the law, the Supreme Court does not have the right to investigate the content of the case file and cannot issue a verdict on its own. Instead, the Supreme Court is supposed to, after inspecting the case file, a) affirm and uphold the verdict, or b) reject it entirely, or c) in case of deficiency in the research, send the case file back to the lower court where the original verdict was issued for completion of research and re-issuance of the verdict. In the *Gerdab* Project, majority of documents used by the court in issuing the verdict were the confessions obtained from the accused against themselves and others yet the lower courts (in this case the Revolutionary Courts) remained largely dismissive of the claim of the accused regarding giving their confessions under torture. Similarly, different branches of the Supreme Court have so far upheld at least two of the execution verdicts. In the case of Saeed Malekpour, as mentioned above, the same branch of the Supreme Court who initially took issue with the absence of an independent expert in the proceedings of the Revolutionary Court in the first round of appeals, upheld the verdict in the second round. Therefore, although the Supreme Court branch considered the proceedings deficient due to absence of an independent expert, it upheld the verdict when the case file was sent back to it. Yet the research they demanded of branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court to complete in order to fix the deficiency in the case file, such as obtaining the opinion of an independent expert, was never performed. In fact, if such research was performed, it did not include an independent inquiry as was with the case of research surrounding the accusation of torture; the research comprised of summoning the interrogators on the case and asking if they had performed torture, to which they all responded in the negative.

For this reason, it appears that the upholding of the execution order of Saeed Malekpour in the second round of appeals did not follow a legal and judicial process. Particularly since reputable sources have reported that the two judges presiding at branch 32 of the Supreme Court, Head of the Branch Reza Farajollahi and his aid Lotfi, were unaware of the upholding of the verdict. This fact both violates the right of the accused to a fair appeal as well as the principle of independence of the judges.

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4.5. Right to Redress

During their detention at Ward 2A of Evin Prison, the individuals accused in Gerdab Project did not have contact with outside of prison and their few visitations with family members were heavily controlled by the prison authorities. However, as soon as they were transferred to General ward 350 of Evin Prison, three of the accused begin writing letter of complaint regarding the tortures they were subject to. In his letter of complaint dated March 10, 2010, Vahid Asghari formally complains to the Military Prosecution Office of Tehran as well as Supreme Disciplinary Court of Judges of all the security and judicial officials involved in his case file. Aside from the interrogators of the Cyber Defense Office of IRGC as the agents of torture, Asghari specifically names research judge Ghasemzadeh and inspector Mohammad Mohammad Mousavi as collaborator and official ordering the torturers. About other judicial authorities connected to his case file, Asghari writes,

The prosecutor and Judge Salavati are aware of the tortures inflicted by IRGC and the interrogators at Evin. However, they deny them to my face and when I say that it has been 60 years since people and political prisoners are being tortured and killed at Evin, they call me crazy!

In his complaint, Asghari asked to be examined by the Medical Examiner so that he can document the signs of torture.

On the bottom of Asghari’s complaint, Sharouz Vaziri, another individual accused in the case file has announced that he is willing to testify to the tortures in any court,

I, Shahrouz Vaziri, Son of Mazaher, am willing to testify to court about the physical and psychological torture, long term solitary confinement, insults and cursing and beatings by IRGC interrogators, extracting forced and dictated confessions and the absence of any contact with the family or ability to retain an attorney from March 14, 2009 to February 8, 2010. Shahrouz Vaziri, March 7, 2010

In a similar statement at the bottom of Asghari’s letter, Saeed Malekpour writes,

I, Saeed Malekpour, son of Hossein, am willing to testify to court about the behavior of the interrogators, torture, long term solitary confinement without visitations or phone calls, extracting confessions under psychological pressure dictated by the interrogators, as well as threats to myself and my family, beating and insults that started from October 4, 2008 until February 17, 2009. With respect, Saeed Malekpour, March 15, 2010

According to article 578 of the Islamic Penal Code, “if any of the judicial or non-judicial authorities or employees inflicts corporal harm and torment upon an accused in forcing him to confess, he shall, in addition to being subject to qisas (retribution) or payment of blood money, be sentenced to a term of six months to three years in prison. If a superior had
ordered such acts, only the individual who ordered will be punished with imprisonment mentioned above.”

Vahid Asghari also wrote a second letter of complaint against the interrogators and authorities of the Cyber Defense Office of the IRGC and sent it out of prison and yet, although close to two years has passed since the first complaint was published, no follow up has been done regarding the judicial and security officials mentioned in the letters. None of those individuals have been summoned to a court and the officials who have been named have remained in their posts. Inspector Mousavi has been transferred from the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes to the Shahid Moghaddas Prosecution Office at Evin Prison, working on case files of political prisoners.

In a separate letters to the head of the judiciary, wife and family of Saeed Malekpour asked that the extraction of confession by him be looked into. After repeated attempts by Malekpour’s family to correspond with the Judiciary, in an open letter to the head of the Judiciary, Zohreh Eftekhari, wife of Malekpour, writes,

A few months ago and in a telephone conversation, my husband listed all the violations of the citizenship rights and human rights recognized in the body of IRI law that he has been subject to during his arrest and interrogations. he asked me to provide the judicial officials with a recording of his conversation so that they can look into the matter; the recording is attached. I request of you, the judge of judges who is to be the haven and sanctuary for all the oppressed and the meek, to order the investigation into the issues discussed in this file and other violations of his legal rights before issuing a verdict.76

Shortly thereafter, the execution verdict for Saeed Malekpour was issued based on his confessions without a case file being opened for his complaints and claims. In fact, after the publication of the letters of Malekpour and his wife, Eftekhari, a case file is opened for the two of them at Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court charging them with spreading lies and propaganda against the regime. This is the same Branch that processed Malekpour’s cyber crimes case file and the same judge, Mohammad Moghiseh, presided over the new case file. No inquiry was ever made into the claims of torture and forced confession.

The only attention given to the claims of torture was when the Supreme Court rejected the upholding of Malekpour’s initial verdict due to deficiency in the case file, including the lack of research surrounding the claim of torture. On October 2, 2011, the lower court dedicated part of their proceeding to investigating this matter. Based on eye witness accounts of that meeting, Mohammad Moghiseh asked the primary interrogator (also known as case expert) of Malekpour whether or not the claims of the accused based on being threatened and tortured and harassed have any merit. The “case expert,” who appeared in court without introducing himself, stated that the claim has been proposed by the accused to evade punishment and is wholly without merit. At that point, without sending the matter to the medical examiner, or requesting documents from prison’s medical office, the court concluded the proceeding on this matter.

Therefore, it appears that, although the Head of the Judiciary and other responsible organizations such as the Military Prosecution Office of Tehran and the Disciplinary Court of Judges are aware and informed of the atrocities committed by military, security and judicial officials connected to the Gerdab Project, those officials continue to enjoy impunity in the utter absence of accountability regarding the widespread claims accusing them of the use of extensive methods of torture to extract confession.

Conclusion

As described in detail, in the four years since the inception of Gerdab Project, the rights of the citizens who have been accused in this project or family members or relatives of those accused, have been severely, systematically and continuously violated. This report proves that the IRGC and the Islamic Republic Judiciary, abuse their legal and political power to violate the rights of the citizens and trample both human rights principles and Iranian bodies of law.

With that in mind and noting that the threat of execution hang over at least three of the individuals accused in the case, Justice for Iran asks the United Nations and other organizations connected to it, as well as, other members of the international community to use all possible venues to:

1- Halt carrying out of all the sentences issued in this case, from execution and life imprisonment to even short term imprisonment sentences, and provide the accused with a fair trial respecting all principles of human rights.

2- All the organizations and individuals whose involvement in the violation of the rights of the citizens in Gerdab Project is well documented and indisputable must be placed in the lists of human rights related targeted sanctions and subject to travel bans and freezing of assets outside of Iran.

3- Gerdab website as the official media outlet of the Center to Investigate Organized Crime as well as a tool for repression and widespread violation of the rights of citizens and cyber activists must be made inaccessible by internet users for systematic and continuous violation of international human rights.
Appendix

Translated Text of the Letter of Said Malekpour

I, Saeed Malekpour, was arrested on October 4th, 2008, near Vanak Square [in northern Tehran] by plainclothes agents who did not present an arrest warrant or identification cards. The arrest resembled abduction since no arrest warrants or ID cards were presented. Afterwards, I was handcuffed, blindfolded and placed at the back of an unmarked Sedan. A heavy-set agent leaned his weight on me by positioning his elbow on my neck, forcing my head down throughout the ride. They transferred me to an undisclosed location which they called the “Technical Office.” When we arrived, a few agents beat me severely and verbally abused me, while I remained handcuffed and blindfolded. They forced me to sign a few forms; one was a detention order but I was not able to read the contents of the others. As a result of the manner of my transportation and the physical assault, my neck was aching for several days and my face was swollen from the punches, slaps, and kicks. Later that night, I was transferred to ward 2-A of Evin Prison where I was placed in a solitary cell 2m X 1.7m. I was only allowed to leave the cell twice a day for a break of fresh air and a few other specific times. During the times I left the cell, I was blindfolded. The only time I was allowed to remove the blindfold was inside my cell.

I spent 320 days, until August 16, 2009, in solitary confinement without access to books, newspapers, or any contact with the outside world. In the cell, there was only a moḥr—prayer rock, a copy of the Koran, a water bottle, and three blankets. After that and until December 21, 2009, I spent 124 days in the general ward of 2-A. I was not granted weekly visits with my family during my detention, both when I was in solitary and when I was in the general ward. During the 444 days of my detention in ward 2-A, I was allowed a few restricted visits with my family that I can count on the fingers of one hand. Throughout the duration of the visit, a Revolutionary Guards officer listened in; the agents were present during the visits. I was not granted the right to make weekly phone calls either. Prison staff and interrogators listened in on any phone call I was able to make. Anytime I discussed the content of my case file with my family, the calls were disconnected. For reasons that I will discuss below, during the 444 days I spent in ward 2-A, I was under constant threat of life, I never felt safe, was always threatened.

On December 21, 2009, I was transferred once again to solitary confinement, this time in ward 240 of Evin Prison. I spent another 48 days (until February 8, 2010) in solitude and without the right to access the outside world. From that date till now, I have been detained in the general wards of Evin Prison, first in Andarzgah 7 and then ward 350. So far, 12 months of the total 17 months of my detention have been spent in solitary confinement, and not once was I allowed to visit my lawyer. During my temporary detention, particularly in the first months, I was subject to various forms of physical and psychological torture by the Cyber Defense Office of the IRGC. Some of the tortures were performed in the presence of Mr. Moussavi, the inspector in the case. A large portion of my confession was extracted under pressure, physical and psychological torture, threats to me and my family, and false promises of immediate release upon giving a false confession based on whatever the interrogators dictated.
I have to add that the confession in front of the inspector was extracted in the presence of interrogators. To prevent me from informing the inspector that my confession was given under pressure, the interrogators threatened that the torture would worsen. At times they threatened that they would arrest my wife and torture her in front of me. In the first few months following my arrest, I was repeatedly interrogated at different hours of the day or night which usually included severe beatings. The tortures were carried out either in the “technical office” outside the prison or in the interrogations office in ward 2-A.

Most of the time, the tortures were performed by a group. While I remained blindfolded and handcuffed, several individuals armed with cables, batons, and their fists struck and punched me. At times, they would flog my head and neck and other body parts. Such mistreatment was aimed at forcing me to write what the interrogators were dictating, and to compel me to play a role in front of the camera based on their scenarios. Sometimes, they used extremely painful electrical shock that would paralyze me temporarily. Once in October 2008, the interrogators stripped me while I was blindfolded and threatened to rape me with a bottle of water. One of those days, as a result of being kicked, punched, and lashed with cables on my head and face, my face became very swollen. I lost consciousness several times while being beaten, but each time they would bring me to by splashing water on my face [and continued with the torture]. That night, they returned me to my cell. At the end of the night when the lights were out, I realized my ear was bleeding. I banged on the door of my cell, but nobody came. The next day I was transferred to Evin Prison’s clinic while half of my body was paralyzed and I was unable to move. The doctor at the clinic, after seeing my condition, insisted that I should be transferred to a hospital. However, I was returned to my cell instead, and I was left there until 9:00pm. At 9 pm, I was transferred along with three guards, while hand cuffed and blindfolded to Baghiatollah hospital. On our way to the hospital, the guards told me I was not allowed to give my real name and ordered me to use the alias Mohammad Saeedi. They threatened me with severe torture if I did not follow their orders.

Before I was able to be examined by the doctor, one of the guards met with the doctor on duty in the emergency room; I entered a few minutes later. Without performing any examinations, radiography, or tests, the doctor simply stated that my problem was stress related. He wrote his diagnosis on the medical report and prescribed a few pills. When I asked him to at least wash my ear the doctor said that it was not necessary. In that condition, I was returned to the detention centre with the blood clot remaining in my ear. For 20 days, the left side of my body was paralyzed, and I had little control over my left arm and leg muscles. I also had difficulty walking. Aside from these tortures, on January 24, 2009, after being subject to severe beatings, one of the interrogators threatened to pull out my tooth with a pair of tongs. One of my teeth broke and my jaw was displaced after I was kicked in the face by him. However, the physical tortures were nothing compared to the psychological torments.

I endured long solitary confinement time (totaling to more than one year) without phone calls or the possibility of visiting my loved ones, constant threats to arrest and torture my wife and family if I did not cooperate, threats to kill me. They also provided me with false news of arresting my wife. My mental health was severely threatened. I had no access to
any books or journals in the solitary cells, and at times, I would not speak to anybody for days.

Restrictions and psychological pressures on me and my family grew so much that after my father’s passing on March 16, 2009, and despite the fact that the officials of the Special Prosecution Office to Investigate Computerized Crimes were aware of his death, they kept the news from me for approximately 40 days. After months, I was given permission to have a five minute phone call with home in the presence and supervision of the interrogators. I then learned of my father’s death.

Masoud, one of the interrogators, burst into laughter and mocked me once he saw me crying about the news of my father’s death. Despite my extensive pleas, they did not allow me to attend my father’s memorial service. In addition to the psychological tortures, the Interrogators of the Intelligence Office of the IRGC illegally, and contrary to religious principles, withdrew funds from my credit card account. The documentation for that is available. They also have my Paypal account. I am not sure what they have done with it. Another example of psychological torture involved was forcing me to perform scenarios dictated by the IRGC interrogators in front of the camera. Although the interrogation team had promised me these films would never be aired on TV, and would only be shown to regime officials to receive a larger budget for their Gerdab Project, I found out later on that the films were shown numerous times on state television during the time that my family was mourning my father’s death. The interrogation team, knowing that my father had passed and my family was mourning and sad, purposefully aired the footage between the third and the seventh day funeral service for my father. This resulted in severe emotional pain for my family particularly my mother. She suffered a heart attack after seeing my picture and false confessions on television. Some of the confession they forced me to make was so ridiculous and far-fetched that they are not technically possible. For example, they asked me to falsely confess to purchasing software from the UK and then loading it on my website. I was forced to add that when somebody visited my website, the software would be, without his/her knowledge, installed on their computer and would take control of their webcam, even when their webcam was turned off! Thus, I produced films from people’s bedrooms!! Although I told the interrogator that what they were suggesting was technically impossible, they responded that I should not concern myself with such things.

I was promised in the presence of the inspector assigned to the case that if I participate in their false televised confession, they would release me conditionally or on bail until the court date. They also promised that I will enjoy the maximum leniency in the issued indictment. I was promised that the indictment would ask for a maximum of two years imprisonment and since time spent in solitary cell is counted as more than normal detention, I could potentially be conditionally released.

These promises were repeated many times, however, after the end of the filming sessions, they did not honor any of their promises. Based on the above information, I have been subject to various forms of psychological and physical torture in violation of sections 1-9, 14-17 and article 1 of the Anti-Torture Law, ratified on May 8, 2002, and section 7 of the Respecting Legitimate Freedoms and Protecting Citizens’ Rights Law, ratified by the parliament in 2004. According to article 4 of the Anti-Torture Law, the confessions I made
are not admissible, and I made the majority of the confessions to alleviate the pressure on my family and friends.

As of today, March 13, 2010, after 17 months of “temporary” detention, I am still in a state of limbo. I am yet to meet with my attorney as permission for visiting with him has not been granted to me. Given the type and size of the case, and the nature of the accusations against me, in order to prepare a defense, I need a computer expert trusted by the judiciary as well as access to my attorney. I also need a place equipped with technical facilities (such as internet).

Therefore, I would like to ask that my request regarding release on bail or bond be granted, or that I will be provided with the above-mentioned facilities inside prison.

Saeed Malekpour
March 13, 2010

Translated Text of the Letter of Vahid Asghari

Submitting a report of violent torture endured by me and calling my confessions, interrogations and further research of the case without legal merit

Complaint*

To the respectful Judge of Branch 15 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court, Mr. Salavati

Copy to the Military Prosecution Office of Tehran

It has been over 22 months that I have been an accused and kept in temporary detention. The period of my temporary detention was filled with long and repeated instances of terrifying and animalistic physical and psychological tortures. The tortures had negative side-effects on me and I do not see them as proportional to the charges I am accused of. Hence, I request attention to be paid to the matter set forth below:

While fabricating a case and crime for me, the interrogators on the case pursued a course of aggrandizing my charges in order to dupe the Judge and the court. I personally responded those by saying that I am not a transgressor yet the actions deeply affected my psychological state. (As per the statement of the Medical Examiner and the psychologist at Evin Prison) the interrogators caused a change in my mood and behavior as well as damaging and fracturing of the skull, nose, backbone and neck bones and topical bleeding from the interior of my nose, bleeding of the gum and my hands and feet. There were also blows struck to the brain, bruising and fatiguing of the body and feet, lashes, hose and baton blows, heavy slaps and punches to the head and brain and ears and my unprotected face, kicking to my feet, stomach, and head and bleeding from the gums and my hands and feet. Blows struck to the brain, bruising and fatiguing of the body and feet, lashes and baton blows took place at all hours of the day and night and happened to everyone. I was present at the scene when others were being harassed and hurt. The obstinate interrogators and
experts of the Judiciary and the Cyber Defense Army of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), aside from punishments bestowed without any legal or sharia based verdict, repeatedly spewed insults and vulgar and sexually charges curses about me, my family, and even their own families and god, the prophet (may god protect us), and the leader.

I am of respectable character and high intelligence and social status and I reject the accusations against me because the interrogators fabricated and falsified the spiritual essence of the crime and through inspiring negative goals and intentions, altered scientific facts and my goals in creating and managing the websites. [Further], through promise of exoneration and release or with force, grudge and torture, they caused the derailing and changing of my intentions.

If you dispatch me to the Medical Examiner’s office, I will produce a statement from them to attest the truth of what I say. The interrogators and torturing authorities must present themselves to the court [...] and personally deny that they committed the tortures. If they shall deny, [they should know that] god does not like liars. For months, they illegally took me into their custody from Evin, blindfolded and handcuffed, and transport me to the torture lair of IRGC, secret code “Firm—sherkat,” at an undisclosed location that operates in an extrajudicial manner in order to achieve their goal of causing diversion in and abusing [...] the case file. They placed me in a tight and dark cupboard filled with harmful critters, dungeons, and bath tub (while hand and feet were cuffed) and placed suffocating bags that would not allow oxygen penetration over my head (exactly like the bags used in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib). They beat me harshly with wooden sticks, hung me upside down with a rope and handcuffs and slapped and slashed me.

Periodically [they demanded] that I write down and sign [matters] that were their demands but untrue and unreal. Or [they demanded] that I give their censoring colleagues (IRIB) an untrue but grandiose confession. (The recorded confessions were illegally broadcasted in the program “Shock,” a special program about the IRGC from Channel One, and the news at 20:30. It also appeared on the illegal website of Gerdab that belongs to IRGC. None of such distribution was with mine or the court’s permission and this is while no sentence has been issued for me. I still stand accused for the crimes that are fabrication of their minds and the court has not yet issued a sentence finding me guilty of the crimes).

They showed large and sharp liquid glue, struck me on my sides and stomach with brass knuckles and placed a knife on my throat or wrists and threaten me with murder or gang rape and thus, forcefully dictate what they wanted to me; they made promises and forced me to falsely confess and sign and fingerprint [the writing]. They also videotaped the false confessions many times. These events can be verified through statements and complaints by myself as well as signatures and finger prints of my ward mates who were themselves harassed and hurt by the interrogation and torture team. I am capable of describing in detail the hour long and month longs torturous events and hereby announce the violations of the Islamic Republic constitution, Citizenship Rights, and the Procedural Code of The State Prison Organization (documented articles are available) and intend to formally file a complaint against the investigating judge “Ghasem Zadeh,” special security inspector and collaborator and those who ordered the tortures “Mohammad Mohammadi Mousavi,” and torturing interrogators and other individuals involved. I further announce that all
confessions and the fingerprints at the bottom of them are without legal merit and value. I announce that the aforementioned individuals committed crime against me. They charged me with lies, insults, accusations [...], rape, theft, spying and other things. Since instead of following up my case file in competent courts they altered things in my case file, I request an official expert from the Office of Justice [for supervision]. I also testify that all the crimes listed in the Anti-Torture Law passed by the Majlis in 2002 were committed on me and the witnesses by the interrogators and the judicial officials:

1. I, Saeed Malekpour, son of Hossein, am willing to testify to court about the behavior of the interrogators, torture, long term solitary confinement without visitations or phone calls, extracting confessions under psychological pressure dictated by the interrogators, as well as threats to myself and my family, beating and insults that started from October 4, 2008 until February 17, 2009. With respect, Saeed Malekpour, March 15, 2010

2. I, Shahrouz Vaziri, Son of Mazaher, am willing to testify to court about the physical and psychological torture, long term solitary confinement, insults and cursing and beatings by IRGC interrogators, extracting forced and dictated confessions and the absence of any contact with the family or ability to retain an attorney from March 14, 2009 to February 8, 2010. Shahrouz Vaziri, March 7, 2010

With regards to the accusations such as starting anti-religious websites, it is important to note that, under the existing laws and regulations pertaining to the freedom of information on the internet, I provided host and domain to human rights activists, political prisoners, university students who were arrested and were being tortured such as Ahmad Batebi, women’s rights activists such as the weblog zarhahb.com, and social and political refugees residing outside of Iran. I also technically and financially supported and managed their websites which is not in contravention with holy laws that guarantee human rights of individuals. Whatever they wrote in their respective websites they did under their own responsibility and not mine. Accusing me of soft over throw and cyber warfare, both being political crimes, will mean that I must be tried in the presence of a jury. If the law is to be executed properly about me, [it must be noted] that I have not created anything of my own. If fact from the moment of my entry into the internet, I never wrote a piece myself and merely [technically] supported websites that are recognized [here] to be anti-regime, anti-revolution, and anti-faith.

The details of my accusation are as below:

Managing the website of Ahmad Batebi, being in contact with anti-revolutionary groups such as Komala and causing the escape of Ahmad Batebi who is one of the starters of the events of July 9, 1999 as a result of this contact and connection, receiving 1000 to 3000 dollars each month from the American consulates in pursuing a soft war against the holy regime of the IRI, spying for CIA and the Munafiqin and having direct contact with the Munafiqin, advertising for employment of the [Munafiqin] Organization in my websites, contact, collaboration, financial support and providing information for the websites of Alireza Nourizadeh and other monarchists, Gooya News website and the American anti-religious firm of Iran Gooya, offering collaboration and technical, financial and propaganda support to human rights groups, organizations and publications such as Amnesty
International and Le Monde Persian as well as anti-revolutionary propaganda website of mitras.org and others, managing different firms in the USA and using them in the soft warfare waged against the IRI regime and other such accusations... This is while I am being tried in the Revolutionary Court by a judge whose expertise is not computer related crimes by the laws of IRIB. Prior to this, using their fabricated cases and aggrandizing, they referred to verse 330 of Surah Al-Maidah (5:330) and requested execution for me in their indictment!

I must be tried in the Computer Crime Court subject to the Law for Computer Related Crimes by a judge whose expertise is computer related crimes; this is my right.

I consider my confessions, obtained under torture and harassment, to hold no legal or sharia based merit and [hereby] announce that my intention in creating the websites was purely scientific. My education major was computer engineering and due to my understanding of the internet, I set upon examining and researching the psychology and business aspect of the cyber space. The interrogators and inspectors on the case, being uneducated and lack expertise in the matter, focused on unimportant issues. They introduced me to the uninformed judge presiding over the case as a sender and receiver of news emails from and to Voice of America, BBC Persian and New York Times, holding membership in Balatarin Website and Iran Proxy as well as preparing news for BBC, Gooya News, Balatarin and Iranian.com. I was also accused of promoting rap music through introducing rap singers such as Ms. Atash for the first time in media outlets such as BBC and Behzad Bolour program, managing a number of anti-regime news websites and online news agencies to spy against IRGC and the nuclear facilities by way of receiving exclusive and confidential news and photos and films from Munafiq and connected experts and presenting them in my news website, promoting Hollywood culture and supporting CIA and Mossad’s projects in Hollywood through my English language cinematic news website, covert management of tens of proxy and filter breaking servers in order to facilitate the access of those residing inside Iran to anti-revolutionary websites and foreign radios hosted online as well as striking a blow to the IRGC through publishing the photos of the massacre conducted by the IRGC in the north of Iran and propagating against the regime, publishing the text of “teaching non-violent protest, calm demonstration and civil disobedient” on the internet and promoting the website of individuals who are opposed to the Iranian revolution in my websites and through the news published on my news analysis sites, creating websites to provide anti-regime and anti-religious political and news links. Even purchasing two t-shirts emblazoned with phoenix and Iran from the website of Bina Behnoud of New York, son of Masoud Behnoud, a fugitive anti-revolutionary, was stated as one of my crimes while considering this act as such is against the very text of the holy Koran.

All that I have done, which has caused the Judiciary to accused me of crimes, I did in order to defend the basic human rights and scientific rights; I have combated superstition and reactionary mentality (Surah Al-Imran 149—3:149). Supporters of human rights will defend me and my actions when they understand the truth. Therefore, the judicial system of the IRI, due to my opinion, conscious and thought, politicized me and did things to me that are amongst the rarest forms of human rights violation. They even sprayed urine on my face and charged me with what themselves should be charged with. Such crimes are nominal and yet, during the interrogation and with the entry of IRGC’s expertise into the mix, suddenly they were aggrandized a hundred folds and became 99% of the crime committed by me.
taking up almost the entirety of my case file at the Islamic Court! Political and personal grudges of the powers at work, covert and obvious, and the lacking and ignorant laws at play, as well as the presence of experts in the processing and interrogation and specialized states of the case and extracting falsified confessions from me under force and torture, has made it so that my actions seem grand and the false information given appear true to deceptively enter my case file as the spiritual essence of the crime. Lack of knowledge on the part of the judicial officials and actors who do not know the difference between a computer and internet (in truth they do not know it!) and are not even privy to the literal meaning of the two terms, has caused dereliction in the case and the errors have not been fixed. For example, in the forms for continuing my detention and interrogation or in the Audio Visual laws put forth by the Islamic Majlis and ... they write that I started and managed anti-regime computer sites!! This means starting and managing internet cafes and not websites—as computer site generally means café-net whereas website is different. Indeed in places like Europe, Canada, USA, and Oceana, not only my accusations will not be considered as crimes, but I would have been rewarded as someone who started such websites, rewarded for web designing, blogging, and freedom of expression, human rights, health, medical and psychological care, and others. My actions were legal both by the laws of those countries and international laws and those of the UN and the divine laws of the holy Koran. As did the other heads of the Judiciary, the current head of the Judiciary has expressed his concern about false case files, and said, “The prosecution offices should not allow the judicial authorities to create case files outside of prosecution office. Judicial work is processing justice. Therefore, they should not relegate their responsibility. It is against the law for the judge to assigns judicial work to such forces while those forces hold a card blanche in their hand and set about creating a case file. The way questioning and interrogation is today, some intelligence and security authorities arrest individuals and interrogate them in their private detention center and later hand them over to the State Prison Organization. Interrogation has to be done by the judge. A confession not given in the presence of the judge is not considered a confession and holds no legal merit. Which lawyer and Islamic thinker will consider such interrogations, done in certain private detention centers, as confession? A confession must meet certain standards. An individual’s confession must be against his own self, not others. I am not saying this under the influence of human right as brandished about by certain countries; they commit the highest oppressions and human rights violations. We are the decedents of Ali (pbuh) and the justice he promised. A judge is not permitted to even smile at either of the claimants or frown at either. Ali considered such acts as oppression. The accused must be given the opportunity to defend himself. The judge must not decide hastily and set upon issuing an indictment based on that decision. This is against the Constitution and Islam.” (May 4, 2007 as reported by news agencies) (Quoting Hashemi Shahroudi in Sharvand Emrooz Weekly, Norooz 2008 Special Edition) I hope that base on the aforementioned they remove the wrong done to me and others and heed the call for justice in the unjust courts of the IRI. Right shall prevail and the judgment day will outlast us all! Will they not think of it? To date, I have not been given the chance to meet with my attorney and discuss the case file. I am not permitted to greet or speak in the presence of my attorneys, misters Zolghadr and Amin Shar’i, even at court. This case file requires an expert on my behalf and one on behalf of the Judiciary (an expert in internet and computer crime and technological advances). Without such expertise and while I am not permitted to meet with my attorneys, this court lacks legal merit and stands to suppress the rights of the accused. They have repeatedly connected me to websites
owned by others while I had no control or hand in their creation and formation. In videos taken of me under torture, they forced me to call Batebi an Israeli spy and consider Hossein Derakhshan to be the spy of CIA and Iran’s Minister of Intelligence! I was accused of insulting the Imam’s, insulting the leader, and causing confusion amongst the masses in my interrogations because I received, without my control and by accident, ridiculing images of the leader and the heads of the regime and the Shi’ite Imams. I had no hand in receiving those emails. They accused me of obtaining unacceptable property, under the sharia law, because I was a Google strategist and used Google advertisements and received money from Google, technologically the greatest search engine. Such accusations are laughable! They do not have any illegal activities and are merely a business. They insist that I am a member of the Munafiqin, active in their cultural branch. This is my largest false accusation while I had and have no contact with them, never met any of them and have no understanding of them. Isn’t this [maliciously] purposeful?

One of my brothers, who was kidnapped from his home much like myself and transferred to Evin without any judicial order shown to him, was falsely accused of propaganda against the regime while he was not active in any way at all and knows nothing of internet or computers! My other brother has sought asylum at the UNHCR in Turkey and has no help or support; he has effectively become homeless. He is accused of managing anti-religious and anti-regime websites and propaganda against the regime and thus pressured to close his weblog and has been threatened with murder. He has been told that if he were to step foot inside or be deported to Iran, he will be killed under torture.

They have been frightened and told that they are under pursuit of IRGC and their phones are being tapped and have no right to be active online. Naturally, in order to pressure me, they were pressured as well and continue to be. Meanwhile, all I ever did was what I was meant to do for the betterment of mankind and so I do not fear or run away from them until we all surrender to the almighty; beware of the day of inspection (judgment).

Is it not that god is the best judge? The prosecutor and Judge Salavati are aware of the tortures inflicted by IRGC and the interrogators at Evin. However, they deny them to my face and when I say that it has been 60 years since people and political prisoners are being tortured and killed at Evin, they call me crazy! Their ears cannot hear truth as god has sealed their hearts and ears.

After Dr. Batebi, the photographer, attorney and now his website manager have been imprisoned. Those who have brought destruction upon the country and humanity, not to be reformed, are trying to destroy these individuals in the eyes of the public.

This is while I was placed third in the National Islamic Law contest and have published the holy Koran in English on the internet across North America. The interrogators made this into an issue as well and considered the version I published to be the Sunni’s Koran! This is while there is but one Koran; no variation to be permissible in it neither by the Shi’ite (who brought their interpretation in the translations) nor by the Sunnis (who accept a Koran with no interpretations).

Based on the laws listed below, as an oppressed individual, I am announcing my complaint against the experts, interrogators, inspector and the judge of the case and IRGC (Cyber
Defense Office) and expect the respectful Prosecution Office of Tehran and the Disciplinary Prosecution Office for the Judges to process my legal complaint and remove the wrongs done to me. In the position of someone seeking the wrongs done to me to be righted, I direct your attention to the following articles:


I was not afforded the protections put forth in the Law for Protection of the Rights of the Accused, the Citizenship Rights Law, Procedural Code of the State Prison Organization, international and national conventions, the Anti-Torture Law, and the International Criminal Procedural Code. The involvement of the obstinate members of IRGC and judiciary and unnecessary and oppressive interference of the Ministry of Intelligence that I personally witnessed, all contributed to the human right violation that took place. These cancerous tumors continue their activity under the protection afforded to them by the government, the Majlis and the judiciary. They do not fear anything, even god. So I would like to guide them to fear god and remind them of a day in the future when the long standing oppression will be lifted. Do they have ears to hear this warning?

I warn you of the day that the laws of god, put forth on earth, are to be carried out correctly and widespread across the earth. You must hence wait for that day alongside me (holy orders). It is noteworthy that they still insist and persist on their false accusations while I remain in this [deplorable] physical and psychological state following different tortures and long stretch of solitary confinement—I have not yet been allowed even a single day of furlough or transfer [of my detention to conditional release].

Vahid Asghari, March 10, 2010

* It must be noted that, due to great distress as a result of torture inflicted upon Mr. Asghari, the original version of the letter bore numerous diction and grammatical inconsistencies and errors. Great care has been taken to ensure the transfer of meaning into English while keeping true to the original text of the letter.
Copy of the First Page of the Letter of Complaint of Vahid Asghari