



# Iran: Release Women's Rights Activists Immediately

## Government Should Drop All Charges, End Harassment

**Updated on January 3, 2008: On January 2, authorities released Maryam Hosseinkhah and Jelveh Javaheri on a reduced bail of 5 million Tomans (approximately USD 5000).**

(New York, December 17, 2007) – Iran should drop politically motivated charges against two women's rights activists facing trial this week because of their participation in a peaceful protest, Human Rights Watch said today. The authorities should release [Jelveh Javahari](#) and [Maryam Hosseinkhah](#) without delay.

Human Rights Watch learned that court officials have set court dates of December 18 and 19 to try Javaheri and Hosseinkhah on charges stemming from their involvement in a [March 4 peaceful gathering](#) to protest the prosecution of other women's rights activists. They were among 26 women arrested at that time and released from detention over the following weeks.

However, authorities have been holding Hosseinkhah and Javeheri in Unit 3 of the general women's ward of Evin prison since November 17 and December 1, respectively, on separate charges relating to their peaceful activities on behalf of the One Million Signatures Campaign to End Discrimination Against Women.

"There seems to be no end in sight to the Iranian government's persecution of women's rights activists," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "They are bringing new charges against women faster than they can try them."

On November 17, Hosseinkhah responded to a written order to appear before a branch of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran in connection with her advocacy for the One Million Signatures Campaign. Officials charged her with "disturbing the public opinion" and "publishing lies" and set a heavy bail of 100 million tomans (approximately US\$100,000) for her release. As a result of her inability to provide bail, authorities transferred her to Evin prison.

On December 1, Javahari responded to a written order to appear before a branch of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, also stemming from her involvement with the One Million Signatures Campaign. The court charged her with "disturbing the public opinion," "propaganda against the order," and "publishing lies via the publication of false news," and then transferred her to Evin prison. According to interviews with Javahari's mother, which are available on the website of the One Million Signatures Campaign to End Discrimination Against Women, the court initially set a bail of 50 million tomans (approximately US\$50,000) but withdrew it on grounds that investigations into the case would first have to be completed.

It is not clear if the trials on December 18 and 19 will also address the new charges against them.

Two other women's rights activists with the One Million Signatures Campaign to End Discrimination Against Women, Ronak Safazadeh, 21, and Hana Abdi, 21, remain in detention on charges of "endangering national security." Authorities arrested and detained [Safazadeh](#) on September 25 and Abdi on October 23 in Sanandaj, a city in the Kurdish region of northwestern Iran.

"The government has not provided a shred of evidence to suggest that Ronak Safazadeh and Hana Abdi have done anything except campaign peacefully for the rights of Iranian women," Whitson said.

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