

1 March 2017

Iran – Arrest of human rights defender Farzaneh Jalali

On 23 February 2017, civil and women’s rights activist, **Farzaneh Jalali**, was arrested in Kermanshah, northwestern Iran. On 27 February 2017, Farzaneh Jalali was permitted to speak to her family for a short time on the telephone. She informed them that she is being held in the Intelligence Service Detention Centre in Kermanshah. Prior to that conversation, the human rights defender’s family were unaware of her whereabouts. The Iranian authorities have yet to declare the charges brought against her and the reason for her detention.

[Farzaneh Jalali](#) is a Kurdish civil and women's rights activist. She graduated from Tehran University with a degree in anthropology and was a member of the Islamic Students’ Association. She was also editor of the Tehran University morning newspaper. Despite achieving high marks in the exams for her master’s degree in 2011, due to her civil and political activism, Farzaneh Jalali was not permitted to continue her studies. In the past few years, Farzaneh Jalali joined several women and children’s rights groups.

On 23 February 2017, Farzaneh Jalali was arrested after being summoned to the local Property Registration Office for an administrative case. When she arrived at the office, unidentified security agents were waiting for her and she was arrested. They took the human rights defender to her home, where they carried out a search. Following the search she was brought to the Intelligence Service Detention Centre in Kermanshah. The reason for the detention and the charges brought against Farzaneh Jalali have yet to be established.

The arrest of the human rights defender is part of an ongoing repression of women’s rights activists in Iran that has intensified in recent months. [Alieh Matlabzadeh](#) is a photographer for the Zanan (Women) magazine and other reformism publications and has actively protested against acid attacks on women. She was detained on 26 November 2016 following a workshop she attended in Georgia for empowering women. Twenty women’s rights activists who participated in the same workshop in Georgia, have also been questioned by the Intelligence Ministry. Moreover, since January 2016 more than a dozen women’s rights activists in Tehran have been summoned for long, intensive interrogations by the Revolutionary Guards, and threatened with imprisonment on national security-related charges. Many had been involved in a campaign that launched in October 2015, which advocated for increased representation of women in Iran’s February 2016 parliamentary election.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned by, and strongly condemns, the detention of Farzaneh Jalali, which it believes to be in retaliation to her legitimate and peaceful human rights activities.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Farzaneh Jalali and other women’s rights activists as Front Line Defenders believes that they have been targeted solely as a result of their legitimate human rights work;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Farzaneh Jalali, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in

the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

3. Cease targeting women's rights defenders in Iran and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.