

Labor Rights in Iran



QUARTERLY REPORT NO. 20

January - March 2022



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Introduction

This publication is Zamaneh Media's 20th Quarterly Labor Rights Report. These reports focus on unemployment, deferment or non-payment of wages and benefits, protests and strikes, freedom of association and assembly, independent unions, workplace discrimination, contract violations, women's labor, child labor, workplace accidents, and labor law. Zamaneh Media monitors these topics daily, and this report provides an overview of the most critical Iranian labor rights issues over the past three months.

The following report covers major labor rights issues, protests, and trends from January through March 2022. The information herein does not address all labor-related events and topics.

In addition to the quarterly reports, Zamaneh Media also publishes special reports on specific labor topics as well as an annual report. For all previously published reports, please visit [Zamaneh Media's website](#).

Overview

The new round of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) “revival” negotiations continued through early March 2022 without tangible results. There were signs that the two sides were approaching a general agreement: the United States temporarily lifted some of the sanctions on Iran, and oil market analysts reported that Iran increased its oil exports last winter. However, oil sale revenues are still facing hurdles reaching Iran. The government hopes that the revival of the nuclear deal will make it possible to access its frozen assets, thus offsetting part of the growing budget deficit this year. Government institutions estimate the deficit to be 350 to 420 trillion tomans. (Exchange rate at the date of this report: 1 USD ≈ 30,000 tomans)

The Minister of Economy and the Central Bank of Iran governor claim that the practice of lowering the budget deficit by borrowing from the central bank has stopped. In reality, the government has stopped borrowing directly from the central bank and instead forced commercial banks to purchase government bonds by overdrawing from central bank resources. Additionally, it has sold frozen currencies to the central bank. These practices are two deceptive solutions that have increased both liquidity and government debt.¹

The inflation rate continues to rise. The Statistical Center of Iran claims that the acceleration of inflation has slowed down, but this slowdown effect is not tangible in the consumer market.

According to the central bank, domestic rice prices rose by 95 percent last year, while imported rice increased by 27.5 percent. In January 2022, the inflation rate of 26 out of 53 essential consumer goods was over 35 percent.²

The central bank also judged that rental rates increased by 48.4 percent in Tehran and 52.2 percent nationwide.³

The table below shows the increase in food prices.

Item	Percentage of price increase
Carrot	5.4
Limes	8.3
Oranges	8.8
Canned tuna	14.0
Eggs	19.7
Cooking liquid oil	20.7
Lamb meat	21.9
Butter	31.1
Milk	31.7
Milk powder	32.6
Chicken	33.0
Apples	33.7

1 [Eghtesad Online](#), December 7, 2021

2 [The Statistical Center of Iran](#), Average Price of Foodstuff, March 2, 2022

3 [Central Bank of IRI](#), Housing Market Developments Report, February 26, 2022

Beef	36.8
Mixed beans	37.0
Red beans	37.9
Onions	46.6
Domestic cheese	47.2
Yogurt	50.9
Pinto beans	52.3
Sugar cube	53.5
Sugar	54.1
Lentils	60.2
White peas	63.2
Ketchup	66.6
Salmon	68.9
Mayonnaise	72.3
Tomato	80.2
First class Iranian rice	95.3
Tomato paste	96.9
Watermelon	118.1
Potatoes	152.2

Rising food prices, recession, and wage suppression have led to widespread poverty and declining per capita consumption. According to estimates by the Wage Committee of the Supreme Council of Islamic Labor Councils, a government-affiliated organization, the minimum wage covers only one-third of the monthly cost of essential items.

Minimum Wage

As in previous years, the Supreme Labor Council (SLC) imposed wage repression on workers through its wage meetings, held in the absence of actual workers' representatives and independent trade unions. SLC determined that the daily minimum wage for temporary workers in 1401 (March 21, 2022, to March 21, 2023) will be 139,325 tomans. (1 toman = 10 rials)⁴

Table: Increase in workers' income and benefits over one year.

Items	Year 1400 (rials) (21 March 2021 -- 21 March 2022)	Year 1401 (rials) (21 March 2022 – now)	Percentage increase	Increase for each item (rials)
Minimum wage - daily	88,516	1,393,250	57.4	507,085
Minimum wage - monthly	26,554,950	41,797,500	57.4	15,242,550
Child benefit (per child)	2,655,495	4,179,750	57.4	1,533,255
Additional allowance based on years of service ("sanavat" in Persian)	1,400,000	2,100,000	50	700,000
Consumer items allowance	6,000,000	8,500,000	41.7	2,500,000
Housing allowance	4,500,000	6,500,000	44.4	2,000,000
Minimum monthly income of workers with two children	43,765,940	67,257,000	53.7	23,491,060
Minimum monthly income of workers with one child	41,110,445	63,076,250	53.4	21,966,805
Minimum monthly income of workers without children and without work experience	37,054,950	56,797,500	53.3	19,742,550

The SLC-approved wage for workers without work experience and children is less than half of the livelihood basket assessed by the Wage Committee of the Supreme Center of Islamic Labor Councils and more than four million tomans less than the figure approved by the SLC itself. The wage committee of the SLC had set the subsistence basket at 11.5 million tomans (115,000,000 rials). The practice of setting a minimum wage lower than the approved livelihood basket is wage repression and forces workers into poverty.

Many workers work without a contract and therefore outside the scope of labor and social security laws. As a result, these workers are deprived of the approved minimum wage.

During "wage negotiations," the SLC finally agreed to set regional wages in five regions. It is not yet clear which areas will be subject to implementing these regional wage guidelines. The proposal for regional wages came from "employment-generating" charities that benefit from cheap labor under the guise of creating employment in disadvantaged areas and for marginalized people. Implementation of this directive will exclude more workers from the scope of the labor law.⁵

⁴ [Shenasnameh](#), March 9, 2022

⁵ [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 27, 2022

Retirees Under Attack

The government proposed that the plan to adjust pensions based on current wages, which was submitted to the parliament in 2021, not become permanent.⁶ In the budget bill, the government also proposed changing the minimum retirement age and the method of calculating retirement salaries. The Parliamentary Integration Committee did not approve these two proposals. Since December 2019, Social security retirees have been taking to the streets in various cities to protest the government's impoverishing policies.

The government withdrew the bill about matching pensions in proportion to the current wages to reduce pensions and relieve some of the burden of its financial deficits. Currently, the government owes over 400 trillion tomans to the Social Security Organization.⁷

In another anti-labor campaign targeting female retirees, the government did not pay retired women their spouse and child support bonuses at the end of the year. The Iranian Labor News Agency wrote that the government directive on New Year bonuses in 2021 is the reason for the 650,000 toman gap between female and male workers' New Year bonuses.⁸

By passing anti-women laws and directives under the pretext of protecting the family, President Ibrahim Raisi's cabinet intends to remove more women from the labor market and channel them to domestic labor, which is outside the scope of labor law.

6 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 13, 2022

7 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 25, 2022

8 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 22, 2022

Protests: Retirees

From January to March 2022, various groups of retirees rallied at least 25 times in different cities. Social Security retirees and the Steel Workers' Support Fund had the highest frequency of retirement protests. The essential demands of retirees this winter included: matching pensions in proportion to current wages, eliminating discrimination between pension fund recipients and state and military retirees, increasing retirement pay based on poverty line income, and receiving free full coverage health insurance.

Protest Group	Demands	Form of Protest
Social Security retirees ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match pensions in proportion to current wages • Eliminate discrimination between Social Security retirees and the State and Military Funds • Increase the minimum pension to 12 million tomans • Receive free full coverage health insurance • Settle government debt to the Social Security Organization • Allow retirees' participation on the pension fund board of trustees • Stop prosecuting retirees 	Protest Sundays: Weekly rallies in over 15 cities
Steel industry retirees ¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match pensions in proportion to current wages • Eliminate discrimination between steel retirees and state and military fund retirees • Increase pensions • Stop the transfer of assets and shares of the Steel Employees Support Fund to private sector buyers 	Weekly rallies in Tehran, Isfahan, Khuzestan, Damghan and Lushan
Health retirees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match pensions in proportion to current wages • Pay overdue receivables 	Numerous rallies in Gorgan, Ahvaz, Fars
Retirees of Ilam police force ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match pensions in proportion to current wages • Increase pensions 	Several rallies in Ilam province
Telecom Company retirees ¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay pension arrears • Insure premium payment 	Rallies in at least ten provinces

Additionally, contractor retirees of the electricity distribution companies in different provinces protested the unequal wages with the retirees of Iran Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as TAVANIR),¹³ Sangrood mine retirees protested forced unemployment after the closure of the mine, and Islamic Republic Airlines retirees protested the merger of the airline employees' pension fund with the State and Military Funds. Haft Tappeh sugarcane retirees also rallied to protest the pension arrears for several days.

9 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 27, 2022

10 [Radio Zamaneh](#), March 6, 2022

11 [Showra-ye-Bazneshastegan \(Retirement Council\)](#), January 10, 2022

12 [Radio Zamaneh](#), March 8, 2022

13 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 26, 2022

Protests: Teachers

After much back-and-forth between the parliament and the Guardian Council, the parliament finally passed the bill on the teachers' payroll ranking scheme. However, the version of the bill that passed differed substantially from what the teachers wanted.

Teachers held a nationwide strike for two days in the winter. According to the Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions, teachers in more than 100 cities refused to attend classes from 29-30 January and rallied in various towns on 31 January.¹⁴

Teachers rallied in at least 20 cities in December 2021 and early January 2022. During the rallies, security forces and plainclothes agents raided teachers in several cities and detained many protesters.¹⁵ On 19 February¹⁶ and 22 February 2022¹⁷, teachers across Iran rallied in front of the Ministry of Education buildings. Many teachers were briefly detained or summoned to security and judicial institutions.¹⁸

The below table shows the security and judicial pressures on teachers and union activists from 22 December 2021 to 20 February 2022. During this period, at least 70 teachers were persecuted in the following ways:

- Arrested or summoned
- Sentenced by the Revolutionary Court
- Subjected to the sentences

The following list is based on news published by the Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions and may not include the names of all teachers who have been summoned or detained by the judiciary and security authorities in this two months period.

Row	Name	Repression method	Outcome
1	Shaban Mohammadi - Member of the Marivan Teachers' Union	Arrested on January 30 and released on February 24, 2022	Free on bail
2	Pirooz Nami - Secretary of Khuzestan Trade Union	Arrested	Released on bail and summoned to court
3	Mohammad Malaki - Member of the Board of the Bushehr Trade Union	Arrested	Free on bail
4	Mohsen Omrani - union activist in Bushehr	Arrested	Free on bail
5	Rasoul Bodaghi - Member of the Board of Directors of Islamshahr Trade Union ¹⁹	Arrested and summoned to court	Free on bail
6	Hamid Ghandi - Member of the Board of Directors of Islamshahr Trade Union ²⁰	Summoned to court	Free on bail
7	Bakhtiar Rezvani - Gachsaran union activist ²¹	Summoned to court	Temporarily free
8	Aziz Ghasemzadeh - Gilan trade union	Summoned to court	Unknown
9	Behnia Bahmainejad - Khuzestan trade union activist	Summoned to court	Unknown
10	Shahriar Shirvani - Khuzestan trade union activist	Summoned to court	Unknown
11	Siamak Chehrazai - Khuzestan trade union activist	Summoned to court	Unknown

14 [Radio Zamaneh](#), March 8, 2022

15 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), 13 February 2022

16 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 19, 2022

17 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 22, 2022

18 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 20, 2022

19 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 15, 2022

20 Previous reference

21 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 14, 2022

12	Iqbal Tamradi - Khuzestan trade union activist	Summoned to court	Unknown
13	Kokab Bodaghi - Khuzestan trade union activist ²²	Summoned to court	Unknown
14	Mahmoud Beheshti Langroudi - Gilan union activist ²³	Short-term detention	Freed
15	Mahmoud Sedighi-Pour - Rudsar trade union activist	Short-term detention	Freed
16	Hassan Nazarian - Rudsar union activist	Short-term detention	Freed
17	Amir Hossein Aghajanpour - Rudsar union activist	Short-term detention	Freed
18	Bahram Bakhshi-Pour - Rudsar union activist	Short-term detention	Freed
19	Massoud Farhikhteh - Rudsar trade union activist	Short-term detention	Freed
20	Haleh Safarzadeh - Member of the Association of Defenders of Workers' Rights	Arrested and transferred to prison	Imprisonment sentence implemented
21	Fathollah Gholami - Member of the Board of Directors of Fars Province trade union	Summoned to court	Prosecution halted due to the intervention of teachers
22	Mohammad Alishvandi - Member of the Board of Directors of Fars trade union	Summoned to court	Prosecution halted due to the intervention of teachers
23	Mehdi Fathi - Member of Fars Trade Union ²⁴	Court sentence	12 years in prison, two years in exile, two years without travel
24	Loghman Afzali - Sanandaj trade union activist ²⁵	Summoned to the Office of Violations	Unknown
25	Maryam Zirak - Member of Qazvin Teachers' Union	Summoned to court	Freed on bail (70 million tomans)
26	Ismail Farhangmanesh - Member of Qazvin Teachers' Union	Summoned to court	Freed on bail (70 million tomans)
27	Ali Allahbakhsh - Member of Qazvin Teachers' Union ²⁶	Summoned to court	Freed on bail (70 million tomans)
28	Ali Kroshat - Member of Khuzestan Province Trade Union	Summoned to court	Trial adjourned
29	Farangis Nasimpour - Member of the Trade Union Association of Khuzestan Province ²⁷	Summoned to court	Trial adjourned
30	Ruhollah (Rada) Mardani - Lorestan union activist	Detention and physical abuse during detention	Temporary release on bail
31	Asghar Amirzadegan - Shiraz union activist ²⁸	Summoned to court	Temporary release on bail (300 million tomans)
32	Rasoul Kargar - Member of Fars Teachers Association	One year imprisonment, two years exile to Arsanjan	Unknown
33	Solmaz Faizollahzadeh - Member of Alborz trade union	Arrested	Freed on bail
34	Ali Hossein Behamin - Yasuj trade union activist ²⁹	Arrested	Freed on bail
35	Mohammad Taghi Fallahi - Secretary of Tehran trade union ³⁰	Execution of prison sentence - six months imprisonment	Imprisoned
36	Latif Rozikhah - Member of the East Azerbaijan Trade Union	Execution of prison sentence - seven months imprisonment	Imprisoned
37	Jafar Ebrahimi	Sentenced to four years and six months in prison	Freed on bail
38	Nusrat Beheshti	Sentenced to five years imprisonment	Taken to the clinic due to illness
39	Mohammad Habibi - Spokesman of the Teachers' Union	Summoned to court	Unknown

22 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 14, 2022

23 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 12, 2022

24 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 10, 2022

25 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 9, 2022

26 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 9, 2022

27 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 3, 2022

28 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), March 5, 2022

29 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), February 22, 2022

30 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), January 19, 2022

40	Abdullah Rezaei - Member of Kermanshah Trade Union	Summoned to security agencies	Unknown
41	Aziz Ismaili House - Member of Kermanshah Trade Union	Summoned to security agencies	Unknown
42	Mohammad Reza Javaheri - Member of Kermanshah Trade Union	Summoned to security agencies	Unknown
43	Maryam Kabiri - Teacher in Tehran ³¹	Arrested	Temporarily freed
44	Hossein Ramezanzpour - Member of the North Khorasan Trade Union ³²	Arrested and transferred to prison to serve sentence	Imprisoned
45	Mohammad Ali Zahmatkesh - Member of Fars trade union	Arrested	Unknown
46	Ghahreman Hatami - Member of Fars trade union ³³	Arrested	Freed on bail
47	Ahmad Heidari - Tehran	Arrested	Freed on bail
48	(First name unknown) Ahmadi- Tehran	Arrested	Freed on bail
49	(First name unknown) Davoodi - Tehran ³⁴	Arrested	Unknown
50	Mohsen Hassanpour - Teacher in Alborz	Arrested	Freed on bail
51	Jabbar Doosti - Member of Marivan trade union	Summoned and arrested	Freed on bail
52	Rezadost - Neishabour union activist	Seizure of mobile phones by security agencies	Unknown
53	Shabnam Baharfar - Alborz union activist	Arrested	Freed on bail
54	Azadeh Mokhtari - Alborz union activist	Arrested	Released on the same day
55	Zahra Ajrlou - Alborz union activist	Arrested	Released on the same day
56	(First name unknown) Jamshidi - Alborz union activist	Arrested	Released on the same day
57	(First name unknown) Salemi - Alborz union activist	Arrested	Released on the same day
58	(First name unknown) Shahriari- Alborz union activist ³⁵	Arrested	Released on the same day
59	Nouredin Amirabadi - Shiraz union activist	Arrested	Temporarily freed
60	Murad Noshadi - Shiraz union activist	Arrest	Temporarily freed
61	Hamid Abbasi - Shiraz union activist	Arrested	Temporarily freed
62	Sadegh Parsai - Shiraz union activist	Arrested	Temporarily freed
62	(First name not known) Golzarian - Mashhad union activist	Arrested	Temporarily freed
63	Mohammad Reza Shariatinia - Khorasan Razavi trade union activist	Summoned to court	Unknown
64	Mohammad Reza Behzadpour - Kerman union activist	Summoned to the Administrative Violations Board	Unknown
65	Fatemeh Bahmani - Trade union activist in Arak	Arrested	Freed on bail
66	Abolfazl Rahimi-Shad - Member of Tehran trade union	15 months suspended imprisonment, 5 year ban from leaving the country and activity in cyberspace, participation in "emotion control" class at Mesbah Yazdi affiliated institute	Unknown
67	Molood Khuncheh Zard - Bukan union activist	Arrested	Freed
68	Suleiman Imamzanbili - Bukan union activist	Arrested	Unknown
69	Nader Aminzadeh - Bukan union activist	Arrested	Unknown

The demands of the officially employed teachers include: implementation of the job ranking law, match pensions in proportion to current wages, guarantee the right to education in the

31 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), January 21, 2022

32 [Radio Zamaneh](#), January 30, 2022

33 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), January 31, 2022

34 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), January 31, 2022

35 [Coordinating Council of Teachers' Unions](#), February 19, 2022

native language for ethnic minorities, increase transparency about the Teachers Reserve Fund, respect the right to organize, stop the persecution of teachers, end Islamist ideological education and the commodification of education, and allow the right to free education.

“Tuition fee teachers” rallied in Tehran for several days, demanding that they have become contract teachers.³⁶ These teachers are a group of primary and preschool instructors who the Ministry of Education uses to meet the demand for teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas, without a commitment to permanent employment. The Ministry of Education pays them much lower wages and benefits than formal teachers.

Green certificate teachers also rallied in front of the Ministry of Education building in January.³⁷ Green certificate teachers are university-educated teachers who the Ministry of Education has temporarily recruited on the basis that their employment is conditional on passing the required tests. These teachers have obtained the required score in the written employment tests and in-person interviews, but the ministry still refuses to hire them despite the fact that they seek formal employment. The Ministry of Education is unwilling to hire this group despite the severe shortage of teachers.

Service-for-purchase teachers also rallied in Yazd, Isfahan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad provinces and several other regions to protest low premiums and inadequate salaries.

36 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 26, 2022

37 [Teachers' Union Telegram Channel](#), February 26, 2022

Protests: Public Sector Workers

The government’s contractionary fiscal policies have caused dissatisfaction among various groups of public sector employees.

Municipal workers across Iran continue to suffer from wage arrears, which extend back more than one year in some parts of the country. City officials attribute the situation to declining municipal revenues and the shortage of workforce contractors, which hold most municipal employees under their contracts.

For the past three months, municipal workers in at least 11 counties and cities have rallied to protest wage delays and harsh working conditions.

As in previous months, Khuzestan province was the scene of the most dissatisfaction among municipal workers. Kut Abdullah municipal workers staged sit-ins and rallies at least three times.³⁸ Workers in Khorramshahr Municipality³⁹, District 6 of Ahvaz Municipality⁴⁰, Ahvaz City Train, and Shush Municipality⁴¹ also staged demonstrations to demand the settlement of wage arrears.

In Lorestan province, Khorramabad municipal workers protested the fact that they did not receive wages for at least six months.⁴²

Municipal workers in Neishabour⁴³, Mehran⁴⁴, Karaj⁴⁵, Rasht, Isfahan, the Tehran Municipality Sports Organization, and Yasuj⁴⁶ were among the others who gathered to protest livelihood problems, delays in payment of wages, and harsh working conditions.

In addition to municipal workers, public transport workers, urban and rural water and sewage, telecommunications, judicial staff, and other public and quasi-government protesters rallied in different parts of the country.

The below table summarizes the protests by public sector employees over the winter.

Protest group	Grievance(s)	Type of protest
Drivers of intercity buses in Urumia ⁴⁷ , Kermanshah, and Tehran ⁴⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harsh working conditions • Insufficient income • Failure to deliver work clothes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rallies in Tehran and Urumia • Driving with lights on as a sign of protest in Tehran
Locomotive drivers in Khorasan Razavi province ⁴⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job insecurity • Insufficient wages • Non-payment of job benefits 	Rallies in Mashhad
Southeastern Railway Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low wages • Wage arrears 	Rally at work

38 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), March 6, 2022
39 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), January 18, 2022
40 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), January 12, 2022
41 [Mehr News Agency](#), March 6, 2022
42 [Tasnim News Agency](#), February 22, 2022
43 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), March 16, 2022
44 [Moj News](#), February 16, 2022
45 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), February 20, 2022
46 [Kebnanews](#), January 22, 2022
47 [Iran Labor News Agency, January 9, 2022](#)
48 [Drivers Syndicate of Tehran Bus Company](#), February 19, 2022
49 [Quds Online](#), February 21, 2022

Employees of Iran Telecommunication Company ⁵⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-implementation of job classification plan • Non-implementation of direct employment contract with telecommunication company • Failure to pay the employer's share premium • Failure to eliminate contracting companies • Dismissal of workers 	Rallies in Tehran and several other cities
Employees of the Water and Sewerage Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage discrimination between formal and contract employees • Failure to eliminate contracting companies • Low wages 	Rallies in Tehran and Aghajari
Office and administrative staff of the judiciary ⁵¹	Rejection of the special reward scheme for employees of the judiciary	Rallies in different cities
Contract workers of the electricity company ⁵²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfair wages • Unsafe working conditions • Failure to eliminate contracting companies 	Rallies
Workers of some government institutions ⁵³	Failure to increase salaries by ten percent according to the budget law	Rallies
Post Office workers, Environmental Protection Agency staff, and Ministry of Labor, Cooperation, and Social Welfare staff	Insufficient wages	Rallies
Employees of the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient wages • Failure to approve special benefits 	Rallies

The scope of the protests by workers and public sector employees is probably broader than what is reported in the news. The government's contractionary welfare policies and reliance on the budget deficit were the leading causes of protest by public sector workers. Other significant drivers of these protests included temporary labor contracts and the exploitation of workers by workforce contractors.

50 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), February 21, 2022 and [the same](#) February 7, 2022

51 [Radio Zamaneh](#), January 9, 2022

52 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), February 16, 2022

53 [Radio Zamaneh](#), March 16, 2022

Protests: Health Workers

In early 2022, Iran went through its sixth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government did not meet its promises to improve nurses' livelihoods, including the implementation of the Nursing Services Tariff Law and the conversion of employment contracts for nurses experiencing discrimination and exploitation due to various informal agreements.

In January 2022, the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) officially announced that it would not be able to hire new nurses due to a lack of funding. This announcement meant that hundreds of nurses who were employed on 89-day temporary contracts to surge to meet the demand of previous coronavirus outbreaks were on the verge of being fired.⁵⁴

In Iran, nurses are forced to work longer hours in more difficult conditions due to a shortage of nurses, yet earn lower wages. They are always worried about renewing their contracts.

During the first three months of 2022, nurses and resident physicians in several provinces rallied to protest discrimination in their wages and working conditions.

Protest Group	Grievance	Form of Protest
89-day nurses ⁵⁵	Non-implementation of converting informal contracts to formal contracts	Rallies in different cities
Health workers in different parts of the country ⁵⁶	Non-implementation of converting informal contracts to formal contracts	Rallies
The staff of Qom Comprehensive Health Centers ⁵⁷	Discrimination in wages and temporary contracts	Rallies in Qom and Tehran
Employees of private treatment centers in East Azerbaijan province	Wage arrears (eight months)	Rallies
Doctors in deprived areas ⁵⁸	Wage discrimination, arrears, and high taxes for specialist physicians	Strikes in several cities
Residents and physicians who are starting out ⁵⁹	Wage discrimination and non-payment of approved wages of 6 million tomans	Rallies in several cities
Residents of the gynecology department of Isfahan Hospital ⁶⁰	Low salary and long working hours	Rallies
Nurses at Mehregan Hospital ⁶¹	Job uncertainty after hospital closure	Rallies

54 [Radio Zamaneh](#), December 28, 2021

55 [Radio Zamaneh](#), January 29, 2022

56 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), February 21, 2022

57 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), February 7, 2022

58 [Free Trade Union of Iranian workers](#), February 3, 2022

59 [Iranian Students News Agency](#), February 1, 2022

60 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), January 25, 2022

61 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), February 3, 2022

Protests: Workers in Industry, Mining, and Energy

As in previous seasons, oil and gas project workers protested wage arrears, layoffs, temporary contracts, non-implementation of job ranking schemes, and inadequate wages. According to reports and news published by official media and unofficial sources close to the workers, at least 60 rallies and sit-ins took place in production, mining, oil, and gas units between December 2021 and February 2022.

One of the most critical protests was the return of the workers of Iran National Steel Industrial Group (Ahvaz Steel) to the streets.

Workers of Tabriz Tractor Manufacturing, Khuzestan Mian-Ab Sugar Company, and Pars Haft-Teppeh Paper Company⁶² had the highest number of protests in production units.

Energy workers, who went on strike in the summer of 2021 to demand a reduction in working days, an increase in wages, the elimination of contractors, and the improvement of dormitories and amenities, continued their protests this winter.⁶³

Based on media reports, the below table shows some of the workers' protests in the energy and mining units.

Section	Location	Demands
Energy ⁶⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abadan Petrochemical • Kian Petrochemical • Jask Oil House Pump • Tondgooyan Refinery • Morvarid Petrochemical • Razi Petrochemical • Ilam Petrochemical • Qeshm oil terminal • Iran Ofogh Yadavaran oil field • Maroon Petrochemical • Rajal Petrochemical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement of job ranking plan • Pay wages in a timely manner • Increase wages • Give permanent contracts
Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bafgh Iron Ore Mine⁶⁵ • Ahar Farm Copper Mine⁶⁶ • Damghan Tarze Coal Mine⁶⁷ • Sangrood Coal Mine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay arrears • Increase wages • Eliminate wage discrimination between formal and contract workers • Implement job ranking plan

62 [Radio Zamaneh](#), March 3, 2022

63 [Radio Zamaneh](#), March 7, 2022

64 [Radio Zamaneh](#), January 31, 2022

65 [Young Journalists Club](#), December 22, 2021

66 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), January 2, 2022

67 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 21, 2022

Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ardabil Sabalan Cloth⁶⁸ • Rangin Yarn company⁶⁹ • Iran National Steel Industrial Group⁷⁰ • Khuzestan Pipe Manufacturing⁷¹ • Ahwaz Pipe Manufacturing • Iranian Butia Steel⁷² • Bandar Abbas Zinc Company⁷³ • Kian Tire⁷⁴ • Kerman Barez Rubber⁷⁵ • Tabriz Tractor Manufacturing⁷⁶ • Saipa industrial Molds⁷⁷ • Motogen Tabriz⁷⁸ • Haft Tappeh Pars Paper Company • Mian-Ab Sugarcane Company⁷⁹ • Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Company⁸⁰ • Firco Cooking Oil⁸¹ • Iran Chocolate (Tabriz)⁸² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop firing workers • Pay arrears • Stop sabotage in production, fulfill promises • Stop firing workers • Pay arrears • Increase wages • Increase the term of workers' contracts • Pay arrears • Increase wages • Pay wages in a timely manner • Stop firing workers • • Make contracts permanent and eliminate contractors • Amend contracts • Pay wage arrears and insurance • • Pay wage arrears • Pay wages in a timely manner
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shafarood Reservoir Dam⁸³ • Karun Dam⁸⁴ • Shirgah Traverse Factory • Tabriz Tile Making⁸⁵ • Sepahan Cement • Kerman Momtaz Cement⁸⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay wages in a timely manner • Increase wages • Stop firing workers

68 [Daneshjoo News Agency](#), December 27, 2021

69 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), January 2, 2022

70 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 13, 2022

71 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), February 10, 2022

72 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), January 31, 2022

73 [Radio Zamaneh](#), January 2, 2022

74 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), February 15, 2022

75 [Didar News](#), January 25, 2022

76 [My Tabriz](#), January 31, 2022

77 [Radio Zamaneh](#), March 9, 2022

78 [Asr Tabriz](#), February 13, 2022

79 [Radio Zamaneh](#), January 23, 2022

80 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), March 2, 2022

81 [IRNA](#), February 3, 2022

82 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), December 22, 2021

83 [IRIB](#), January 2, 2022

84 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), January 10, 2022

85 [Radio Zamaneh](#), December 31, 2021

86 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), March 16, 2022

Gig Economy Workers, Informal Workers, and the Unemployed

This winter, municipalities continued the practice of “organizing” vendors, which in reality is meant to create more restrictions on them.

The municipality of Tehran implemented a “comprehensive plan to organize vendors,” according to which vendors were moved to designated locations.⁸⁷ A similar plan was implemented in Isfahan.⁸⁸ In Tabriz, city agents tasked to remove sidewalk blockages beat a peddler.⁸⁹ The city council there also announced that it is “organizing” vendors in a market, and the vendors of Tabriz rallied to protest the situation. Amol, Boroujerd, Qazvin, and several other cities implemented similar plans to control and prevent the activities of peddlers.

In Mahshahr, police and municipal officials attacked fruit sellers and set fire to their work areas.⁹⁰ In Gorgan and Tehran, city agents who were tasked to remove sidewalk blockages beat peddlers.

On January 25, 2022, construction workers rallied in front of parliament to protest the lack of insurance and demand the approval of Article 5 of the Construction Workers’ Insurance Act.⁹¹ This amendment was submitted to the parliament in November 2020 but was not approved because the speaker of parliament intervened in favor of the employers. If the amendment is approved, employers would have to pay a larger share to fund the construction workers’ insurance.⁹²

The protesting workers also demanded requirements for employers to observe occupational safety and the repeal of instructions to exclude construction workers from the scope of construction workers’ insurance.

According to official figures, only half of the 1.2 million construction workers are insured.

In January 2022, drivers for the online food company Snappfood once again rallied in front of the company’s office in Tehran to protest low fares and the lack of insurance, work facilities, fuel, and work accident insurance.⁹³

Rising unemployment and insufficient wages have led to an increase in the number of workers and drivers in web-based taxi and delivery companies. According to Snapp officials, the number of people registered on the platform increased by one million in 2020. The number of drivers employed in Snapp’s passenger transport sector is estimated at more than four million, all of whom work without social security insurance and employment contracts.

As in previous seasons, border guards targeted kulbars and sukhtbars routinely. Kulbars are porters who carry a heavy cargo of commercial goods on their backs and cross dangerous border areas in order to avoid interception by guards. Sukhtbars are fuel carriers along Iran’s eastern borders.

In the provinces of Kermanshah, Kurdistan, and West Azerbaijan in western Iran, border guards killed at least two kulbars, and shot and wounded 21 more.

87 [Borna News](#), February 13, 2022

88 [Imna](#), March 13, 2022

89 [Aftab Yazd](#), February 7, 2022

90 [Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers](#), January 30, 2022

91 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), January 25, 2022

92 [Iran Labor News Agency](#), October 6, 2021

93 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 14, 2022

Six kulbars also died from falling from heights, frost, mine explosions, and drowning in a river, and 14 were injured in accidents, landmines, and falling from heights.

As in previous seasons, in eastern and southeastern Iran, Baluch sukhtbars also suffered through severe conditions and were killed or injured by military personnel or accident caused by the pursuit of government officials.

Since implementing the Razzaq project in Sistan and Baluchestan in the past year, sukhtbars have faced more restrictions and violence.

According to media reports, 17 sukhtbars lost their lives last winter: four were killed by direct fire from border guards and thirteen died escaping from the military forces. Fifteen sukhtbars were also injured, eight of whom were directly shot by border guards, and seven of whom were injured in road accidents.

Work Accidents: Bloody Winter

In the last three months, occupational accidents have killed at least 95 workers in different parts of Iran. As in previous seasons, construction workers face the most severe work-related accidents and fatalities. The Deputy Minister of Labor has said that 40 percent of work accidents occur in the construction sector.

During this period, accident rates in large and medium-large industrial workshops and oil and gas projects increased. Twenty-three workers in production units and oil and gas projects were killed in workplace accidents, and 125 were injured. The severity of the injuries was reported from low to very high, but a detailed description of their condition and extent of the injury is not available.

The below table lists work accidents in January-March 2022. This table is based on news published by official news agencies and unofficial sources close to the workers and may not cover all work-related statistics.

Sector	Death	Injury
Large and medium-large workshops	23	125
Construction	23	33
Public service	21	26
Small workshop	11	16
Mines	6	23
Services	7	-
Seasonal/Agricultural	4	20
Total	95	243

At least four of the workers who died were under 18 and were considered child laborers. Two of these child laborers were street workers who lost their lives in accidents. Seven of the above workers were Afghan migrants.

Migrant Workers

The situation for Afghan immigrants in Iran grows increasingly difficult. The process of identifying, detaining, and deporting illegal immigrants has intensified, according to a report by the newspaper Ettelaat on February 2, 2022. Many immigrants do not spend the night in their dormitories due to fear of arrest and deportation. Rather, they spend the night in the city, dressed as municipal cleaning workers. The authorities often capture Afghan workers and inflict violence and inhumane treatment on them.⁹⁴

Since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan, more Afghans have fled to Iran. Iran, however, has closed its borders to Afghan refugees, announcing that it will resettle them in three border camps and then return them to Afghanistan as soon as possible. On February 9, Afghan government officials in Nimroz province, a refugee crossing point for Iran, announced that Iranian security forces had killed 100 refugees and injured 640 in six months.⁹⁵

94 [Ettelaat Rooz](#), February 2, 2022

95 [Radio Zamaneh](#), February 9, 2022

Suppression

According to a spokesman for the Teachers' Union, security and judicial institutions have summoned hundreds of teachers since January 2022.

Several members of the Tehran Bus Company Syndicate were summoned to court. Nevertheless, protests are expected to escalate in response to the government's austerity policies.

Officials at the Prisons Organization, whose failure to treat member of the Iranian Writers' Association Baktash Abtin led to his death, also prevented Shapoor Ehsaniarad, a board member of the Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers, from being sent to the clinic. The life of this prisoner is in danger.

The below table lists the government's repressive measures against labor activists.

Summoned to court	Osman Ismaili Mahmoud Salehi Iqbal Shabani Maziar Seyednejad
Summoned to the labor disciplinary committee	Drivers of Tehran Bus Company

Summoned to the security police or the prosecutor's office	<p>Davood Razavi</p> <p>Reza Shahabi</p> <p>Hassan Saeedi</p> <p>Mohammad Aslaghi</p> <p>Nasser Muharramzadeh</p> <p>Mohammad Komisari</p> <p>Amir Takhiri</p> <p>Ata Babakhani</p> <p>Hossein Karimi Sabzevar</p> <p>Ibrahim Heydari</p> <p>Vahid Fereydouni</p> <p>Mohammad Ghasemi</p> <p>Behrooz Ebrati</p> <p>Shahrzad Golpour</p> <p>Assadollah Soleimani</p> <p>Seyyed Mojtaba Sadeghi</p> <p>Amir Amirgholi</p> <p>Mohammad Iran Nejad</p> <p>Negin Aramesh</p> <p>Muzaffar Salehnia</p>
Court order issued	<p>Hirad Pirkhodaghi, labor activist, 4 years and 8 months in prison</p> <p>Abbas Ghaffari, Sepahan Cement Worker, 1 year imprisonment, 2 years exile</p> <p>Asal Mohammadi, labor activist, 1 year and 8 months in prison</p> <p>Maryam Sadeghi, labor activist, 1 year in prison</p>
Court order carried out	<p>Amir Abbas Azarmvand, labor activist</p> <p>Haleh Safarzadeh, labor activist</p> <p>Alireza Saghafi, teacher activist</p> <p>Nasrin Javadi, member of the board of the Free Trade Union of Iranian Workers</p> <p>Shadi Gilak, nurse and labor activist</p>

Arrested	<p>Amir Abbas Azarmvand, a journalist defending workers' rights</p> <p>Khabat Shakiba, a labor activist in Kurdistan</p> <p>Haleh Safarzadeh, retired teacher, labor activist</p> <p>Alireza Saghafi, labor activist</p> <p>Allieh Eghdamdoust, feminist and labor activist</p> <p>Ribvar Abdullahi, a labor activist in Kurdistan</p> <p>Protesting workers of Kut Abdullah Municipality</p> <p>Arash Mohammadi, a labor activist in Kurdistan</p>
Expelled from work	<p>Protesting workers of Sepahan Cement Company</p> <p>Protesting workers of Tabriz Motogen Company</p> <p>Protesting employees of Isfahan Telecommunication Company</p>

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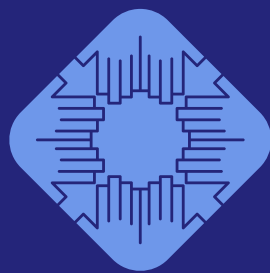
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