

Iranian government intensifies crackdown on left-wing opposition

SEP and ISSE demand immediate release of arrested students

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On January 15, as part of a brutal crackdown on domestic opposition, the Iranian government arrested another 10 members of the Students for Freedom and Equality in Iran (also known as the Radical Left). Two more students were arrested on January 24. More than 40 members of the group are now behind bars at Iran's notorious Evin prison or have been released on bail.

On December 4, Iranian police forces arrested 33 students who were participating in demonstrations marking "Students Day." The day commemorates the deaths of three students who were killed by the government of the US-supported Shah of Iran on December 7, 1953, while they protested the visit of then-US Vice President Richard Nixon. (See "Iranian government cracks down on student protests.")

The students involved in the recent wave of protests have denounced both the Iranian government and the war plans of US imperialism. The arrests of the students reflect a growing crisis of the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which is responding to popular unrest with increased repression.

The 12 students arrested this month may have been involved in organizing protests against the earlier arrests. The Radical Left is a group of socialist students that is not affiliated with any political party. It consists of students who have come into opposition to both the current Iranian government and the official Reformist movement associated with former presidents Mohammad Khatami and Hashemi Rafsanjani.

So far, only seven of the students arrested in December have been released after meeting a very high bail. A few other students are eligible for release on bail, but their families have been unable to meet the cost. Most of the students are not eligible for release at

all and are still being interrogated.

Some of those arrested in early December were allowed to meet relatives earlier this month. According to reports from family members, the students have been kept in solitary confinement throughout the period of their detention. The students are under intense pressure to confess on television that they are linked to exile groups and have attempted to destabilize the country.

There are reports that several students show signs of having been severely beaten. One has reportedly broken his leg and shoulder, while others have cuts and injuries on their bodies.

Before the recent arrests, the WSWWS spoke to an activist in Iran who described the reported treatment meted out by the Iranian government. "We have heard that some students on several occasions were referred to the prison hospital," he said. "We think that they are mostly under psychological pressure, but beating is something normal to make prisoners cooperate with the interrogators. One student has reportedly attempted suicide and was sent to the prison hospital." (See "An interview with an Iranian activist on arrests of left-wing students.")

There are indications that the treatment meted out by the Iranian government against student protesters is becoming much more severe. Earlier this month, a Kurdish student, who was not a member of the Students for Freedom and Equality, was killed while in the custody of the Iranian Intelligence Ministry. The parents of the student said that before he was killed, he "showed evident signs of torture and abuse."

Since December, scattered gatherings have been held at different campuses across the country to demand the students' release. Many of those involved in these

gatherings were summoned to the so-called “Disciplinary Committee” located in their universities for questioning. The government was evidently closely monitoring those arrested this month.

In addition to facing arrest, students involved in the protests have been threatened with disciplinary action, including being barred from their classes.

Both the timing of the arrests and the location of the imprisoned students highlight the utterly reactionary and antidemocratic character of the Iranian regime. The students were arrested on a day commemorating the US-backed Shah’s brutal actions against the Iranian population. The Evin prison where they are being held was created by the hated SAVAK domestic intelligence agency under the Shah. Ever since, it has been used for the holding and torture of political prisoners.

The Socialist Equality Party and its student organization, the International Students for Social Equality, demand the immediate release of all the arrested students. All charges must be dropped. These students have committed no crime. They have done nothing but voice their entirely justified opposition to war and the government of Iran.

A pamphlet by Keith Jones

The *World Socialist Web Site* will continue to follow the treatment of the arrested students closely. The WSWS calls on its readers to send letters of protest to the Iranian Interests Section in the United States at requests@daftar.org. Please send copies to the WSWS here.

The students arrested in January are:

1. Amin Ghazaie
2. Bijan Sabagh
3. Soroush Dashtestani
4. Anahita Hosseini
5. Morteza Eslahchi
6. Bita Samimizad
7. Behzad Bagheri
8. Morteza Khedmatloo
9. Soroush Sabet
10. Mohammad Pourabdollah
11. Mohammad Zera’ati
12. Farzad Hasanzadeh

The students who were arrested on December 5 and are still in prison are:

1. Saeed Habibi
2. Peyman Piran

3. Mehdi Gerailoo
4. Nader Ehsani
5. Behrooz Karimizadeh
6. Ali Salem
7. Ali Kolaie
8. Abed Tavancheh
9. Sadra Pirhayati
10. Saeed Aghamali
11. Keyvan Amiri Elyasi
12. Hadi Salari
13. Amir Aghaie
14. Soroush Hashempour
15. Mehdi Allahyari
16. Majid Ashrafnejad
17. Reza Arab
18. Mohammad Saleh Aboman
19. Sohrab Karimi
20. Farshid Doostipour
21. Javad Alizadeh

Those students arrested and released on bail are:

1. Anoosheh Azadbar
2. Ilnaz Jamshidi
3. Roozbeh Safshekan
4. Roozbehan Amiri
5. Farshid Farhadi Ahangaran
6. Milad Omrani
7. Mohsen Ghamin
8. Nasim Soltanbeigi
9. Amirhossein Mehrzad
10. Mahsa Mohebi
11. Saeed Aghakhani
12. Okhtai Hosseini
13. Arash Pakzad



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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