

Report on the blinded persons due to shootings by the Iranian Armed forces

What has been happening in Iran since September 2022 ?

Mahsa Amini's death in custody in September 2022, because she was accused of not wearing her hijab properly, led to major protests against the Islamic Republic of Iran and its repressive government. Since then, all over the country, opponents and protesters take to the streets to demonstrate. However, in response to these protests, Iranian armed forces started an increasingly violent repression.

Until today, the Human Rights Activists News Agency revealed that more than 500 persons have been killed in protests since September 2022, and counter more than 20 000 arrests. The Norwegian NGO Iran Human Rights counted 145 executions in the country in 2023.

Different means of terror are employed by the Iranian armed forces of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Arrestations, imprisonment, torture on women, men and children, threat on human rights activists, on lawyers, journalists, artists, condemning to death penalty innocents after partial and unfair trials.

Iranian armed forces targeting protesters in the face

What's more, medical reports revealed that during the demonstrations, the Iranian armed forces were targeting protesters with lethal arms and that only in Tehran and in Kurdistan, more than 580 persons lost sight in one or both eyes.

We gathered testimonies of at least 43 blinded persons at the occasion of nationwide protests, that happened in Tehran, Mahabad, Piranshahr, Kermanshah, Bukan, Kerman, Saqqez, Isfahan, Paveh, Kamyaran, Abadan, Bandar Abbas, Esfahan, Hamedan, Sanandaj, Karaj, Shiraz, Chahar mahal and Bakhtiari, Lorestan.

Aged from 6 to 43 years old, including mostly young men and women, the 43 victims we listed lost sight between September 2022 and at least January 2023. Their stories are very similar : while participating in one of the weekly anti-regime protests in their own cities, the victims got shot by the Iranian armed forces and suddenly got hurt by not only one but many pellets in their bodies and especially in their faces and eyes. Some of them were only bystanders and not participating directly in the demonstrations.

Medical reports of 20 victims were shared to ophthalmologists and NGOs, which led to the conclusion that the heads and faces of the protesters were directly targeted by the Iranian forces. Iran Human Rights established a "systematic" practice by analyzing these reports and comparing the multiple bullet impacts on the victims' faces.

Some were denied treatment from public hospitals or feared to be persecuted there as well since it is known that hospitals are under control of the regime security forces. Doctors refused to treat them for fear of being arrested since it has happened to doctors who had helped injured protesters. Therefore, many went through several surgeries in private hospitals.

Most of the blinded protesters and bystanders didn't get the chance to recover from their loss of sight. It has become their new arm of protest against the repressive Islamic Republic of Iran. Some have lost their jobs because of their blindness since some of the victims were tattoo artists, archery artists, models.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps responsible for the shootings

The victims were shot at by the Iranian armed forces, notably the special police officers, the Basij militia members who belong to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and the counter-insurgency forces.

The Basij militia is a Paramilitary agency working for the Iranian regime and in charge of the violent regulation of the anti-regime. In testimonies these forces gave to Nazeran, members of this group claimed they weren't trained to use lethal weapons and that they shouldn't shoot at protesters when they are at a too short distance from them but that they don't respect these rules when they intervene in the demonstrations. In these interviews, the Basij members claimed using kalashnikov when they received such an order from their superior.

French and Italian bullets used by the Iranian forces to shoot at protesters

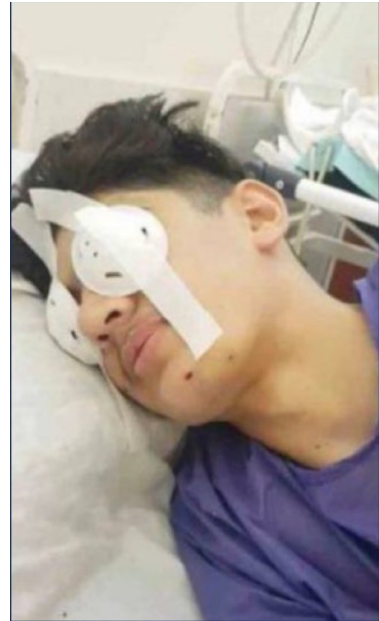
Birdshot pellets, paintball bullets, tear gas canisters, bullets from hunting rifles ... These were the bullets found in the victims' bodies according to the multiple medical records gathered by NGOs such as IranWire, the Iran Human rights Organization. By targeting the protesters' faces, the Iranian forces caused blindness to at least the 43 victims we gathered.

The birdshot pellets are small projectiles supposed to be used for the purpose of hunting. According to a report of France 24 analysis, the bullets effectively hurt the target when the latter is at about 45 meters.

Furthermore, in the same report, France 24 revealed that at least 13 shotgun cartridges were marked with the name "Cheddite", a Franco-Italian company which is one of the largest ones specialized in the production of empty cartridges. These cartridges were identified in Tehran, Yazd, Mahabad, Shiraz, Karaj, Rasht, Sanandaj and Kamyaran. This raises an international legal issue because since the adoption of an EU Council Regulation No 359/2011 of 12 April 2011, export equipment such as firearms and ammunition to Iran which could misuse them for "internal repression" is sanctioned at the EU level. Since then, there is an embargo on Iran and there shouldn't be any weapons sold to the country by France and Italy. Hence, according to Patrick Wilcken who is in charge of research on the control of weapons for Amnesty International and investigated the case, these cheddite cartridges may have been imported in Iran by Turkey which buys these ammunitions to the company, and which has been quoted on a forum of iranian hunters in 2013 as being the provenance country of the cheddite weapons they were using. This is also a possibility envisaged by Nicholas Marsh who is a Senior researcher at the Peace Research Institute Oslo.

II: Who are the blinded victims ?

Zanjar Tondro : A 18 year old man, living in Piranshahr. She was shot by 14 bullets and lost sight in his right eye, but also risks losing sight in his left eye. He was shot during anti-regime protests. A video of him was shared on social medias



Kowsar Eftekhari : A young woman living in Tehran. She was shot on October 12 while she was protesting with other students against the Islamic Republic of Iran. She lost sight in one eye.

Hossein Abedini : A 20 year-old man, living in Tehran working as a model. He was shot during protests on September 21 which cost him the use of his right eye.



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Behzad Hamrahi : A 43 year old man, living in Tehran. He participated in the protests in November 15 when he got shot at his left eye and lost sight.

Hossein Hosseinpour : A 25 year old man, living in Mahabad. On November 17, while he protested against the regime, he got shot at the head and lost the use of his left eye.



Kowsar (Mahbanu) Khoshnoudikia : A woman, living in Kermanshah and archery champion. She got shot in the eye on December 9 and got blinded.

Parviz Yari : A Man from Kermanshah. While he was participating in the Dareh Vijeh, one of his eyes got hit by a bullet and he lost sight.



Hossein Nouri : A 25 year old man, living in Tehran and working as a nurse. He participated in a protest in September when one of his eyes got hit by a bullet and made him lose sight.

Sadegh Soufi : A 27 year old man, living in Bukan and a student in physical education. On November 25, he participated in an anti-regime protest and got blinded in his left eye.



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Hossein Bagherpour : A 24 year-old man, living in Kerman and working as a mechanic. He was shot in one of his eyes for having participated in a protest on Valafajr Street in Kerman.

Nachirvan Maroufi : A 18 year-old man, living in Saqqez, working as a conscript. He was demonstrating when we was shot and blinded in one eye in September.



Benita Kiani Falavarjani : A 6 year-old girl, living in Isfahan. She wasn't protesting but was only at her grandfather balcony when she got hit by a bullet and lost sight in one eye.

Firouz Mirani : A man and artist from Paveh. He lost sight in both eyes because he was shot by pellet bullets during protests on November 30.



Parsa Ghobadi : An 18 year old man, from kamyaran. On november 21, he participated to protests when he was hit by pellet bullets and was blinded in both eyes.

Ali Mohammad Rezaei : A man living in Abdanan. Just outside his house, on november 18, he was shot a pellet bullet in one of his eyes and lost sight.

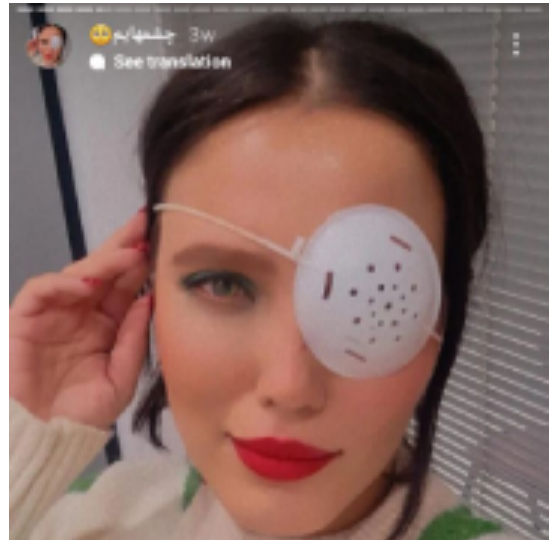


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Ghazal Ranjkesh : A 21 year old woman from Bandar Abbas, a law student. While she was on her way home from university, she ended up being shot by a pellet bullet in her right eye and lost sight. This was on November 15. She then received an operation on November 2022.

Raheleh Amiri : A 30 year old woman, from Kerma; working as a psychologist. In late November, she received a pellet bullet in the eye because the security forces shot her and she lost sight in one eye.



Niloofar Aghaie : A young woman and a master student on her way to become a midwife. She participated in the doctors' protests when she lost sight in one eye by a bullet and was beaten when she fell on the ground.

Helia Babaie : On October 26, she was protesting in Isfahan when she got shot by a pellet bullet by a member of Iranian armed forces, who was wearing a military uniform. She explained in her testimony that during the protest, the armed forces surrounded them and then that when the officer shot her while he was only at 2 or 3 meters from her which immediately caused her loss of sight. She was taken to the hospital but still didn't recover.



Elaheh Tavakolian : A Kurdish woman, studying business management and coming from Esfahan. She participated in the first protests in October. According to the testimony of someone who saw her get blinded, she was singing slogans when the Islamic Republic's security forces shot her in the eye with pellet bullets just like another man in the protests who was holding a poster of Khamenei. She is now back to her studies and still denounces the government repression.

Farid Rashidi : A 30-year-old man, from Bandar Abbas. While he was taking part within the protests in his city, he was shot by 12 pellet bullets in the head, including 4 lodged in his eye. He describes the scene in a testimony. The armed forces cut off the lights in the street and shot at protesters street by street. They were wearing camouflage uniforms and balaclavas. He was shot by one of them who was hiding before shooting at him. He went to a hospital in another city to avoid control and went through three surgeries but he now has cataract, his sight is strongly damaged.



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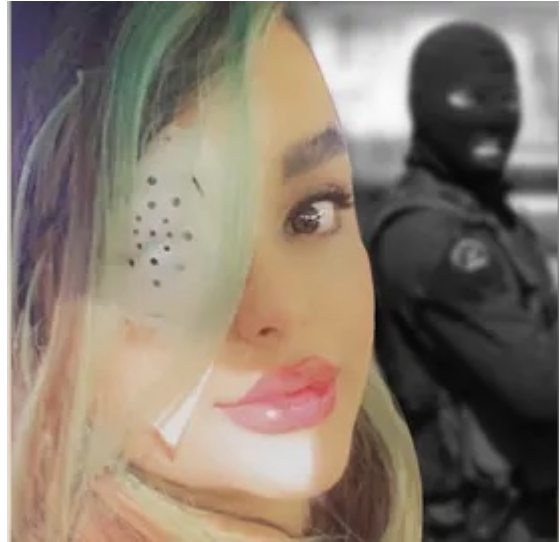
Kimia Zand : A woman, living in Tehran. While she was protesting in the capital on october 26, she was shot in her right eye and lost sight. The bullet found in her eye was coming from a paintball gun. She went through multiple operations and now has partly recovered from her injury.

Yaser Alvandiani : A 34 year-old man, artist and athlet, living in Hamedan. On September 20, while he was protesting in the streets of Hamedan, three riot police officers surrounded him and shot him in the eye which made thim lose sight in one eye. He explained that he had to sell his art work to afford surgery and regain his sight.



Ali mohammadi : A 22 year-old man living in Hamedan. A 6pm on September 21, when he was protesting against the regime, he suddenly was shot with several pellets which made him lose sight and conscience. He was taken to the hospital but his eye remains damaged.

Zoha Mousavi : A 25 year-old woman, living in Isfahan. She was shot while she was taking part in the October 2 protests against the regime. Her temple got hit and her sight remains unrestored although she received treatment.



Farideh Salavatipour : A woman from Sanandaj. She was protesting on November 17 when she was shot by multiple pellet bullets and got blinded in the eyes.

Ali Tahoneh : A 34 year-old man, from Karaj. He was shot during protests on September 22 by pellet bullets in both eyes. In his testimony, he explains that riot police forces repressed the protest and caught him in a parking lot helping an old man injured and shot him in the eye with a gun with a green laser light. He recovered partly after three surgeries in Tehran, but mentions he is traumatized because he saw children get shot in the eye as well.





Mohsen Kafshgar : A 31 year-old man, engaged in the protection of children's rights. He took part in the protests and got shot by a pellet in his left eye which made him lose sight without hope of recovering from it, according to his doctors

Shahriar (fake name) : A 26 year-old man, living in Tehran. On September 20, he decided to join the protests in his city when police officers came on motorcycle and targeted the crowd by shooting with teargas, paintballs and pellet bullets. He was shot by 5 pellet bullets and lost

sight in one of his eyes. He was rejected by hospitals before being finally able to get treatment 40 days later, on November 1.

(needs photo)

Iman : A 34 year-old man and father of a 9 year-old boy, from Lorestan. During a protest in which he was involved in late October, he was shot by 60 pellet bullets and lost sight in his right eye. He had to sell his car to get treatment, he underwent surgery but his eyes are still injured

(needs photo)

Seyed Javad Mousavi : A man, born in 1983, working in a factory. He was protesting when security forces on motorcycles surrounded the crowd and targeted them. He tried to hide from them but was found and he was shot in the eyes. According to testimony, the police officer who shot him in the eye said he knew him before shooting.

(needs photo)

Hamid Reza Panahi : A man living in Tehran. On November 16, he took the street but the security forces trapped the protesters and started shooting tear gas and pellet bullets. He got hit by one in his right eye whereas he was trying to escape from them and lost consciousness. He underwent surgery the next day but he will remain blind and shocked by the violence he faced which causes him sleeping trouble.

(needs photo)

Nazanin : A 16 year-old woman, from Bandar Abbas. She was participating in the November 16 protest in her city with her mom she had to convince to come, when she suddenly got shot by a masked member of riot police on a motorcycle. She lost sight in her left eye because of she was targeted by 11 pellet bullets coming from guns with laser lights.

(needs photo)

Mostafa : A 31 year-old man, from Chaharmahal and bakhtiari. In September, while he took part in the first protests against the regime, he revealed that armed forces on motorcycles suddenly arrived and shot him with 50 pellets. 3 lodged in his head including one in his left eye. He was hosted by one of the residents and had to get treated in another town the next morning but he still partly lost sight.

(needs photo)

Soheil : A 29 year-old man, living in Shiraz. On November 16, he decided to join the protests but then the armed forces came to repress the crowd and started shooting with pellet bullets and tear gas canisters. He tried to resist when he we was shot in one of his eyes and lost sight.

(needs photo)

Shahin (fake name) : A Kurdish man. On September 22, he was protesting against the Islamic Republic of Iran when a member of the police forces blocked him in a street and shot him at a 10 meter distance with 20 pellet bullets, including 2 in his eyes which caused him the loss of his sight in one eye.

(needs photo)

Mohammad Farzi : A man and actor. While he was participating in a protest, he got shot in one eye and was blinded.

(needs photo)

Reza : A 26 year old man. He was at the front of the protests on November 16 when he had to face the police and suddenly was shot in the eye by pellet bullets. He escaped and went to see a specialist the same night. His name and identity are protected.

(needs photo)

Amir Velayari : A man from Tehran, working as a hairdresser. He lost sight in his left eye after having been shot by pellet bullets while he was protesting in the capital on september 24. He didn't get immediately treatment at the hospital because doctors refused him the entrance but he got treated only two days after and still have the pellet lodged in his eye. His identity and photo are protected.

(needs photo)

Saman : A man shot during protests in october 2022

(needs to know more about the story and needs a photo)

Mersedeh : A woman shot during protests in November 2022

(needs to know more about the story and needs a photo)

Hossein Ashtarii : a man



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(needs to know the story and needs a photo)

Kiyarash Porsasol : a man shot in january 2023

(needs to know the story and needs a photo)