

# Monireh Baradaran

ARRESTED: October 1981

DETAINED IN: Eshratyab Revolutionary Committee, Evin and Gohardasht Prisons

RELEASED: October 1990



1. My name is Monireh Baradaran Khosroshahi. I was born in 1954 in Tabriz, but I went to school in Tehran. I got a B.A. in sociology from the University of Tehran. I continued my studies in Germany after I left Iran, and I have a master's degree in social sciences from the University of Hanover. I was a political prisoner, detained in Evin Prison, during the 1988 massacres of political prisoners.
2. I make this statement in support of an investigation into the mass execution of political prisoners in 1988 in Iran.
3. This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. Except where I indicate to the contrary, I make this statement on the basis of facts and matters within

my own knowledge. Where the facts and matters in this statement are within my own knowledge, they are true. Where the facts and matters are not within my own knowledge, I have identified the source or sources of my information, and I believe such facts to be true.

## *Arrest and Detention*

4. I was arrested once before the Revolution and was in prison for six months [June to December 1978]. I was released from the Shah's prison when the people called for the release of political prisoners.
5. The second time I was arrested was in October 1981, on the same day my brother and sister-in-law were arrested. Forty days after his arrest, my brother was executed. Under the Shah, he had been in prison for eight years. I was in prison for nine years, until October 1990.
6. When I came to Germany after I was released, I decided to focus on prison and focus my activities on fighting against torture and the death penalty. I wrote my memoirs of my time in prison in three volumes. The work was translated into German, Dutch, and Danish. In 1999, I received the Medal of Karl von Ossietzky



[of the International League for Human Rights] as a sign of gratitude for my work in writing the book. I wrote two more books relating to prison. One is about the psychology of torture, based upon my own experience. The other is about truth commissions in other countries.

7. I was acquainted with political issues because both my brother and sister were arrested during the time of the Shah. All my cousins were in prison. One of my cousins committed suicide under the Shah after being tortured in prison. My house was filled with political discussions. Naturally, when I entered university at the age of 19, I was drawn to political activities. I was not really affiliated with any particular group. The reason I was arrested under the Shah was because I was trying to smuggle in a communiqué to my brother, who was being held in prison. I was held for six months at that time. I was very active during the Revolution.
8. After the Revolution, I was active because I did not believe that the new situation reflected the principles upon which the Revolution was based. In particular, I disagreed with the compulsory veil, the increased role of the clerics in the courts and Parliament, as well as the censorship of the press, which had led to the banning of most of Iran's newspapers.
9. I became active with a Marxist group, Revolutionary Workers Organization [Rah-e Kargar], and was in this group for about a year and a half before being arrested. The activities were above-ground. We had a student cell, which distributed leaflets in the street about our group's ideals, and we started debates and discussion of important issues in the street and we recruited new members. Our group never believed in armed struggle.
10. I was arrested only because I was known as a leftist in the university.
11. I was first taken to Eshratbad Revolutionary Committee. It was like a military barracks. I was there for about ten days. Then I was taken to Evin, where I was tortured. They were beating me in prison to find out which group I belonged to and what I did for them. Everyone was being beaten because they used to arrest people randomly and did not have information on them. They were beating us so that we would confess. Sometimes detainees would confess to things they had not done, just to escape being tortured.
12. For several days we were held in the hallways outside the prison cells and torture rooms so we could hear people being tortured. We could hear moaning, and there were groups of people everywhere. The rooms were full, overflowing. We were wearing blindfolds, but if you dared to lift your blindfold you could see that people had bandages around their heads, their feet. In the hallways there were both men and women. But in the cells the male and female wards were separate.
13. I was in the hallway for five days. I think that my interrogation and torture lasted altogether seven hours. The torture was beating and flogging the soles of my feet, which was customary at that time. They also flogged my back. There was another



torture that they used at the time: *qapani*. It often caused problems with the shoulder; it would dislocate it. They did not hang me by my shoulder, but they did so to others. My fingers were numb at first, but after a few weeks it went away. However, I still have pain and discomfort in my shoulder.

### *Trial and the Prison Conditions*

14. They did not know anything about me when I had my trial a year later [October 1982]. I think the religious judge was Mobasheri. They do not introduce themselves, but from the description of other friends, I gathered it was Mobasheri. We were not blindfolded in the trial. He was alone—there was no prosecutor and there were only the two of us in the room. It lasted no more than five minutes. He told me that I had been accused of demonstrating in front of the U.S. Embassy. This was the sort of thing I had acknowledged during my interrogation, because I thought it was harmless. I was also charged with being a Marxist and reading leftist literature. The religious judge also asked if I would do an interview and I refused. Two to three weeks later they showed me a paper on which it was written that I was sentenced to three years in prison. A short while later I was transferred to Qezel Hesar Prison.
15. One year after my trial, they learned more about me. I was returned to Evin and taken to solitary confinement, interrogated for six months, and I had another trial, on a Thursday in the fall of 1983. The religious judge and one other person were present. At my second court [trial], not only was I charged with my former political activities but also with organizing protests within the prison. The second trial lasted a bit longer than the first one, twenty minutes, and it was interrupted by the call to noon prayer. The judge left and didn't come back. The next day was Friday [Fridays are a religious holiday], so I had to wait until Saturday. These two days were difficult because I thought I might be executed, and I wanted to get it over with.
16. The charges brought against me were not true. The judge would cut me off and ask me personal questions. I had a fiancé. He would ask me whether I had met his family, whether they had given me any gifts—women were asked a lot of personal questions meant to humiliate them. They wanted to know if I would give an interview and if I was going to reject my group. Every person was asked: “Are you going to denounce your group?” “Are you going to give us an interview?” Little mattered that you were not part of any group; they would ask you, “Would you denounce ALL groups?” Sometimes it was funny—they had arrested an Iraqi who they thought was a spy. They found out he was innocent, and decided to release him. But before being released he was asked to make a public denunciation. His interview was broadcast at the Hosseinyeh, for all the prisoners. The Iraqi prisoner asked: “What should I denounce?” The person in charge of the interview hesitated a moment and said, “Well, you have to denounce Saddam.”
17. I was sentenced to ten years. At the time, the sentences started when they were issued. They would not count your imprisonment beforehand. So it would have been 13 years for me. I was happy I did not get the death sentence. When I had this second





Embroidery made by Monireh Baradaran, after the prison massacre. She wrote: "I sewed it in a solitary cell, while I was still under the shock of the killings and overwhelmed by the memory of my young cellmates who had been killed. . . . I was anxious to hide my work from the guards, for having a thread and needle was forbidden, and in solitary confinement we were not allowed to do any crafts. . . . The flowers are the symbols of youth and purity; perhaps they represent my executed cellmates. The sun always represents the truth for me, and the person on the boat represents us, the survivors, who have stayed to tell the story."

trial, Lajevardi [the prosecutor for Evin Prison] had already left the prison—it was the fall of 1984. I think that if I had been caught with the same things two years earlier I would have been executed for what I had done. This time it was a bit better.

18. I was then taken to Qezel Hesar again. A year after I got my ten-year sentence, in 1985, I was pardoned by the Montazeri committee. Many people were released at that time. The first group was the repenters and also people in prison who were passive—they were not really politically active. I was very surprised that I was pardoned after all the punishment and additional sentencing I had received while in prison.

One of the people who came to talk to me about the pardon was from Tabriz and knew my family. He told me that he wanted to get me released. But the head of the prison, Meysam, wanted me to give an interview in front of the prisoners or be videotaped. I refused so they reduced my sentence to three years [instead of releasing me]. About the same time I was transferred to Evin Prison.

19. I had a third trial in Evin in the summer of 1987. Because I refused to give the interview, they gave me a new sentence of ten years. I spent two months in solitary confinement. Then I was taken to the *sar-e moze'i* [i.e. prisoners who defended their



political opinions and remained steadfast] ward, with the other women who refused to give up their views. That summer I was in a very nice ward. I had been there while in prison under the Shah. The people who had been there before us were those who did not have very serious charges. It had a little garden and trees. There were two levels. The doors were open and we had limited access to the garden during the day for specific hours.

20. In early fall, maybe September or October of 1987, they took everyone out of that ward. They took us to the Amuzeshgah [building]. These wards are at the top of Evin hill. They did not exist under the Shah. They had made prisoners themselves construct these buildings. They are very big and I think there were perhaps six wards with three levels, and there were a lot of solitary cells there. I was taken to one of those wards. We were in ward 3, on the third floor. Each of these wards had three levels. We were on the top level. The majority of us were leftist *sar-e moze'i*. There were 40 to 50 MKO *sar-e moze'i* as well. There was also a room of Bahá'ís, maybe 20 or 30 Bahá'ís.
21. More moderate MKO and leftist prisoners, along with some repenters, were held on the second floor. They were not as hardcore. The number of repenters had diminished compared to the years before, because most of them had been released. The first floor where the doors were closed [also called the "solitary" ward, because it had no communication with other wards] was mostly MKO and some leftists. They had brought these prisoners back from
- Gohardasht. I do not know why the doors were closed, but I know they had been taken to Gohardasht as a punishment.
22. During the time of Lajevardi, group activities were really prohibited. Any communal life, even eating together, was prohibited. In our lessons in the Hosseinyeh, when we were receiving ideological training or teachings, the idea was that you had to get closer to God, and in order to get closer to God you had to be on your own. Therefore being together with friends would distract us from God. This psychological torture was inspired by the archaic idea that the lonelier the prisoner is, the more prone he/she is to forget everything and doubt his or her beliefs. When you isolate someone, there is an unsettling of ideas; the ideas are confused and you are more open to being influenced by the prison authorities.
23. Most MKO *sar-e moze'i* believed at that time that there should be a very serious and strong distinction between them and the repenters. So, for example, when the repenters brought food for the ward, they would not take the food from them. In practice they were on a hunger strike, because they would not take the food. Most of us, the leftists, were opposed to this kind of behavior. For us it did not make a difference whether the food was brought by the guards or the repenters. The MKO prisoners would also exercise in a group, which was prohibited. Each time the wardens caught them while exercising in a group they would beat them right away. There were permanent clashes between prisoners and the prison guards.



24. Around the end of fall, November or December 1987, we were seeing videos of interviews with prisoners. Since we refused to go to the Hosseinyeh to watch them, they would broadcast them over the loud-speaker so you had to listen to them. These were mostly high-ranking leaders of leftists, mostly the Tudeh members. Mostly these interviews aimed at tarnishing people who had already been executed or people who had refused to take part in the interview. Again it was mostly about the higher-ranking people. In one interview the husband of our cellmate Parvin Goli Abkenary was accused of having collaborated with the regime. He had not given an interview before he was executed, but, nevertheless, the authorities put out the story that he had collaborated. After hearing this, his wife committed suicide by eating depilatory cream. This was one example of a person who was dragged through the mud. It was very hard in the ward, because she had been with us for so long. This event affected us all a lot.

### *Events Surrounding 1988*

25. In February 1988, a representative of the Ministry of Information was in Evin—we knew him as Zamani. He called the whole ward and there was an office and he took the prisoners one by one into his office. He asked two questions, about “the Islamic Republic” and “Islam.” He would then say with a sarcastic smile, “This is a democracy, so you can say whatever is on your mind.” But most of us said this is an inquisition and I am not going to respond. He would not argue with us, he would just

take notes. Some people openly expressed their views. It was surprising that he would neither argue with us nor threaten us for what we were saying. This was totally unprecedented. Before, for a similar response during an interrogation, there would have been punishment. But it was very unusual for a whole ward to be taken and asked about their views.

26. Furthermore, theoretical debate occurred only during the trial, before the prisoner was issued a sentence. But in the winter of 1988, Zamani [representative from the Ministry of Information] had not come to try us. Nothing changed in prison after his visit. And that was unprecedented. We thought these questions and answers were strange and mysterious: first, because we had been already tried and sentenced, and second, because the prison environment had changed a lot. It was not as oppressive. It was much more open; we could protest more easily. We were still being punished if we protested, but still the situation was better. Before we had been forced to call the guards “sister” or “brother.” But by now we no longer did this, and the nature of the relations between the inmates and the wardens had changed. We did not feel compelled to follow to the letter all the rules and regulations.

27. Actually, there was no parallel between what was happening outside and what was happening inside. During the 1980s, our society was under a very harsh and oppressive rule. It is true that around the mid-80s there were some openings on the cultural front, but it had nothing to do with the political situation. Ordinary people had re-



- nounced political struggle and were trying to live their lives. The opposition groups had been weakened by repression and executions, whereas, we, the political prisoners, were continuing to protest. There was no correlation between what was going on outside in the society and what was going on in the prisons. The war, in spite of its heavy cost for the regime, had no impact on us inside the prisons, at least for us the leftist prisoners. The creation of the MKO army [in Iraq] may have lifted the moral of the MKO prisoners, but not ours. We did not agree with the MKO ideas, and they never spoke to us about their organization's situation. In the early 80s, many of them had decided to keep a low profile and feign repenting. But the leftist prisoners kept resisting and, for instance, refused to pray or to attend the "educational programs" at the Hosseinyeh. The resistance in Qezel Hesar [in the early 80s] led to harsh punishment such as the "boxes" or "the coffins." This was the darkest period of our prison time.
28. I think that around the spring of 1988 (after the New Year, 21 March), there were some changes in the structure of the wards. People who had served their sentences but were kept in prison, the *mellikesh*, some of them were transferred to solitary cells and some to the closed cells (not solitary) downstairs. The Bahá'ís stayed in our ward, ward 3. We knew this because, when we went to the courtyard to get fresh air, there were holes in the windows downstairs, and we could communicate and get information by talking through these holes, exchanging short written notes, or lip reading.
29. From that ward, where the doors were closed, they put some of the MKO in solitary confinement. But one of them, Raf'at Kholdi, had a life sentence and, psychologically, she was really gone, so they took her from our ward to a ward where moderate prisoners were held. Many of her family members had been executed—at least two of her brothers. I don't remember very well. In the summer of 1988, in the midst of the massacres, she also committed suicide by swallowing depilatory cream.
30. There was a closed room in our ward that was an office for the guards, but they never used it. One time, a three-member delegation came there that was called the "pardon delegation." I don't remember the details. I even remember the face of one of them, but nothing more. This happened either shortly before the massacres or shortly after they had started. They called us all and asked if we were praying or if we were willing to write a letter denouncing our group.
31. They [a second delegation] came again. It was about lunchtime when they came in. They came to the rooms, actually. They also said they were the "Pardon Delegation." I think it was late July. I remember clearly; he asked if we were willing to write a letter denouncing [our group]. We were asked to introduce ourselves and respond to the questions. I don't remember if they were taking notes. As far as I remember only one person agreed to do so. She wanted to be released. I remember she said with intense anger, "Yes. I will." Some of the delegation members looked familiar; they had been part of the delegation that Montazeri had sent to the prison. But I am



- sure that this delegation had nothing to do with the Death Committee. No one was pardoned after this visit.
32. After that visit, the *mellikesh* were taken away. The atmosphere in our room had changed.
  33. I am not sure when this second delegation came—after they took the televisions away or before—but I am not sure when.
  34. One night we heard shooting and some noise and commotion. That night, three leftists were executed, and I know their names—they had death sentences. That night the prison environment was especially tense. Two or three days later, visitations were suspended. Each ward had one day of the week for visitations. Some of our cellmates went to visit their brothers or husbands [who were also prisoners]. It was during this visit that they were told visitations were suspended. That same evening, two female guards took the television that we had in the ward. All this happened between 26 and 28 July 1988.
  35. That same night, or the following night, at 10:30 p.m, they came and called three MKOs. It was strange; it was not for interrogation—they just told them to come. In a very short period of time afterwards they took several other groups of MKOs. In a few days, from a total of 40 to 50 MKO sympathizers, only 15 were left in our ward.
  36. Before, if someone was not well, they would be taken to the prison infirmary—but at that time the guards would not take anyone. They wouldn't bring newspapers, etc., so our relationship with the outside was completely cut off.
  37. About five days after they took the first group of MKOs, we were out in the courtyard getting fresh air when an MKO member, who had recently been taken away from our ward, returned and joined us in the courtyard. She was completely pale and did not look normal. She ran towards her MKO friends who were sitting in a corner in the courtyard; during those days no one was in the mood for walking or exercising—people were keeping to themselves. She went to them and told them some things. We felt that in the MKO group there was suddenly some fear, shock, and surprise. We could sense the change of feeling in the group. Later, we heard that she had been taken to ward 209 for interrogation and that the hallways were filled with prisoners—men and women—and they were given a questionnaire to be filled out. They had to respond to the questions prior to the interrogations. And then they were going to a room for interrogation. In the courtyard it was just a few minutes before a Revolutionary Guard came and said, “Why are you here?” and took her away. But the girl had not come on her own. I still don't know why they brought her there for a few minutes. I think that they wanted someone to let the others know what was happening. She was called Zahra (Farzaneh) Mirza'i and was executed the same summer.
  38. One day they took the group of 15 MKOs that was left there—they called all of them together. They brought them back around noon to the ward. The group told us that their turn had not come up. They also said there were a lot of people there. I do not know if they were given the paper or not.



They were still in the ward for a few days, still disoriented and waiting—they knew they had to go but no one came for them. I think that around the second half of August they took them too. This was the last MKO group. They never came back. There was one member of that group left. She was an MKO but did not pray. She had distanced herself from the group. She had been in prison for seven years. She was uncomfortable and uneasy and very upset that they had not taken her as well. She was even willing to tell the guards, “You have forgotten me.” But they finally called her too and she never came back. Her name was Mahin Qorbani.

39. I think about 40 to 45 MKOs were taken from our ward. No one came back. Their bags and belongings were left all over the rooms. The rooms were empty. In the fall they slowly informed their families and took away their belongings from the ward. At the same times that MKO people were taken from our ward, other MKOs were also taken from ward 1—they were the ones who had been sent to Gohardasht for punishment and brought back to Evin afterward—and MKOs were taken from among the *mellikesh* ward. From these two wards they took all the MKOs who never came back. From ward 2—the more moderate prisoners—they also took the MKO sympathizers. Only a few of them survived. We came to know this because we communicated through the windows while we were in the fresh air.
40. We heard at that time that one woman who was a repentor (and her husband was also a repentor) had seen the execution

of some MKO girls from her own ward. I did not hear this from the repentor in person, but she was intentionally taken to observe the executions. She was not among the ones to be executed. She had seen the MKO girls who had been hanged and she had seen how they made a knot of the chador around their necks, but it was knotted around their neck so it would not fall off. They didn’t want to execute her, but they wanted her to see the executions. The repentor’s husband had been executed too. I am not sure if she had seen her husband’s execution, but she was devastated. Even before that, she was not very psychologically stable, but after this she was really not well—she was screaming every night in her sleep.

41. [During the killings,] they took one of our wardmates, Fatemeh (Fardin) Modaress Tehrani, to ward 209 for interrogation. When she came back a few days later, she had turned into an old woman. She told us that there, in ward 209, there were many MKO men who perhaps knew they were going to be executed, but they were in good spirits and were talking and singing together. From there, they were taken to the gallows. Fardin was not an MKO affiliate, and they didn’t execute her then. She was a Tudeh affiliate; she was forty and had a daughter. In a few days all her hair turned grey like an old woman’s. They executed her in late March 1989. Six months later, I was sent to a solitary cell [because I still refused to sign the paper they required from us before releasing us]. There, I found a coded note carved in the wall by Forouzan Abdi Pirbazari (she was the head of the



- [Iranian] volleyball team). She had served her sentence and was a *mellikesh*.
42. Based on what we, women prisoners, sensed at the time, which was confirmed later by the accounts and the memoirs of male prisoners, in mid-August the killing of MKO sympathizers ended. By early September it was time for the leftists. The execution of the men started then. We know that in four or five days many were executed. These were mostly in Gohardasht but some were in Evin Prison. We think that in Evin Prison, whether MKO or leftist, very few survived this process. I think the executions continued through the end of October 1988. Most of the prisoners were executed.
43. Parallel to the execution of male prisoners, as we learned later, the flogging of female leftist prisoners began. We heard this news from a young Bahá'í woman who had been arrested at that time and was in a solitary cell and had been brought to our ward from there. We heard from her that, at each time when it was praying time, there was a call for prayer, and they would take them from their cells and then flog them. We did not know who they were—we learned later that these women were our friends and leftist ward mates, taken to solitary confinement some time before. The first group were leftist *mellikesh* women. Every day they were flogged for refusing to pray. Those who accepted praying were returned to ward 2.
44. Then it was our ward's turn. They took ten to fifteen inmates to court [Death Committee]. The first group that went to court was brought back to the ward shortly afterwards. They told us that in court they had asked them, "Are you Muslim? Do you pray?" I think they may have asked them if they believed in their political groups or not. I think they all said no—except that they said that they still believed in their groups, the groups that had supported the Islamic Republic. [During their trial] these people claimed they had done nothing wrong, because their groups supported the Islamic Republic. They were told they were nonetheless sentenced to flogging because they refused to pray. They were told that their sentence was an "unlimited number of lashes until they either accept praying or die." These people had told the court at that very moment that they were protesting these sentences and they would go on a hunger strike. Two other groups were taken to the court and they had also protested against a similar sentence by going on a hunger strike.
45. By noon, when the call for noon prayer started, the guards came to our ward and took the first group with them. After several days and, for some, after several weeks, a number of the prisoners accepted praying, because they could not bear being flogged for an unlimited period of time. I heard that many of them were trying to find ways to commit suicide. One of them cut her vein, but the guards found her, and they saved her. Later, they brought her back and flogged her.
46. One of them, Soheila Darvish Kohan, died in a solitary cell, but I do not know exactly how. There are two possibilities: she either hanged herself with her chador in her cell, or, since she had some kind of heart



ailment, her heart may have given up under the floggings. I am not sure what explanation was given to her family. For the families of these people who wanted their death certificates, they had marked natural causes. Someone else whose husband was killed in 1988—she had gone to get a certificate—she told me that the death certificate said he had died in his home. It was not unusual for the executed to have fake reasons listed as the cause of death. It would never be marked “execution.” I have not heard of any instances where the death certificate said “execution.”

47. I think that there were time restrictions on the guards for the floggings—everyone had to be flogged individually and in the half hour within the prayer call. With the large number of inmates refusing to pray, there was a waiting list for the people to be flogged. Only when some prisoners agreed to pray was there room for new ones. We were just waiting our turn. We were sure it was going to come to us too—we were teasing each other about how we could limit the impact of the floggings. One would say, “I would put a platter under my chador on my back; then they would flog me and it would make a noise and they would think they would be doing so well that it makes this noise.” One would say she would put a pillow [under her chador] and then we said that they would tell her, “Well, you have never had a hunchback!” She said she would reply, “Oh you know I have always had it, you just never noticed.” Psychologically, we needed to make fun of events. At the beginning, Mojtaba Halva’i, the famous torturer, was flogging female inmates himself. But later, female guards

took over, and they were flogging the prisoners. They used to flog on the back and so [the prisoners] had black and blue bruises on their backs; sometime after they were returned to the ward, the bruises started to heal.

48. In late September 1988, a man by the name of Forutan became the new head of the prison. He had also been the head of the prison for a short period after Lajevardi left in 1984. He gathered us all together, and he introduced himself and asked if we had any requests. Obviously, no one even raised his head to respond to him. He said that the visitations are going to start, again, so you can give the phone number of your house to the guards. About a week later there were visitations. Forutan had also gone to the solitary cells and told the recalcitrant prisoners that the flogging was over, “So break your hunger strike.” The women had asked, “How can we be sure?” He told them, “It is over, I tell you, I am the new head of the prison.” First, the prisoners didn’t believe him, but when they saw that the flogging had, in fact, stopped, they stopped their hunger strike. Two of them had been on hunger strike for 21 or 22 days while being flogged several times a day. They were brought back to the ward ten days after they had stopped their hunger strike. They still looked like the dead—when we saw them, we started to cry. Not only had they lost a lot of weight, but they also were peeling because of dehydration. They could not walk straight, and I think they probably had marks from the floggings, but in prison we did not necessarily show these things to each other.



49. The visitations started. That is when we learned about the scope of the killings. Our families came into the visitation rooms crying because outside large numbers of people discovered that they had no one to visit, and the guards kept telling them, “Wait here, you do not have anyone to visit.” They did not really give them the news there. They would send them to a district revolutionary committee—there they would get their loved one’s bags. They would not tell everyone at the same time— [informing them] happened over a period of two months.
50. In each visitation, we would hear the names [of executed prisoners] from our families, because our families had known each other, because they had been visiting their prisoners together for years. We estimated that from the female wards—and the ones below—between 200 and 250 women had been killed. I couldn’t estimate how many men were executed. Our ward mates who had brothers or husbands in prison came back, and most of them said that their relatives had been executed.
51. In October 1990, I was finally released. Six months after the killings, they had started to release everyone else. The men were released before the women. In the women’s ward we were still there for a few years. Some of us were released and some others were sent on leave from prison. They sent them on leave and brought them back repeatedly, and eventually they let them stay out permanently.
52. Naserian himself threatened me that if I refused to recant they would either kill me or leave me forever in a solitary cell. He sent me to solitary confinement where I was kept for six months.
53. Even the families were treated with the utmost cruelty. After the massacres, many of us had visitations with our families in a room without the glass [partition], in the presence of Naserian himself. They used this situation to put pressure on the inmates’ families and force them to pressure us to give in and recant. At that time, both my parents had passed away. My sister had come to visit me; I was still in solitary confinement then. Before bringing her in, they had asked her to stand aside, because they wanted to tell her something. And then they had told her that her hijab was not appropriate. This was exactly how they had treated the executed prisoners’ relatives in the previous months: using false excuses to make them wait. My sister thought that I had been executed. She fainted. There were no women there, so there was no one who could slap her. The men would not touch her, so they threw a bucket of cold water over her. When my sister came in and I hugged her, she was all wet, and she was blue. When we met, I asked her, “Why are you wet?” She told me to be careful and take care of myself. Naserian would say, “Tell her to repent.” My sister said, “She has done nothing. Why are you keeping her?” This was two weeks after Khomeini’s death. She was very brave, but she did not understand what she was saying. “Now that Khomeini is dead why are you still keeping her?” Naserian said, “You too are an anti-revolutionary! Get out!”

*Frankfurt, July 2009*

