

8 March in Tehran and more Human Rights Violations

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Despite the mass arrests of prominent members, women organizations inside Iran have decided to go ahead with a previously planned event of peaceful gathering in front of the Parliament (Majlis). Anti-riot squad police have a visible presence and violence has been used to disperse the crowd into smaller groups to further control them. Two prominent members of the women's movement, Fatemeh Govarayi and Marziyeh Mortazi were severely beaten in front of the Parliament.

Fifteen people have been arrested among them Maral Khorami and Gisoo Ahmadi. The authorities have been prepared for this gathering and have been taking cautionary measures. All wireless network services have been discounted within a 2 kilometers radius around the Parliament. Cell phone users are unable to make/receive calls. The same strategy was used by the Iranian authorities during the July 1999 mass protest of students to make communication impossible.

The houses of some of the released women activists, who were arrested on March 4th in front of the Revolutionary Courts, were searched last night in intimidation.

Many non-governmental organizations and women's groups have decided to participate in today's protest. There are around one thousand people gathered today and many famous faces are present including Babak Ahmadi and Khashayar Deyhimi. These numbers do not include the number of teachers who have been protesting on the same site for the past five days. The teachers are demanding the education minister Mahmoud Farshidi to step down, their salaries to be raised and that colleagues fired for political reasons be re-hired. The protesters are exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly according to article 27 of the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution.

Today's peaceful gathering came to end in a violent atmosphere with heavy police presence. Shahla Entesari read the organizers' statement and the crowd started to disperse. The Police has confirmed four arrests so far.