

# Human Rights Lawyers in Iran: Under Attack for Doing Their Job

**Iran is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for lawyers**, who face arrest and imprisonment for defending rights under Iranian and international law. Human rights lawyers, the last defense for those unlawfully prosecuted, now number fewer than a dozen in Iran due to relentless state persecution.

## FACT Sheet

### LAWYERS IN IRAN

May 2025

#### For defending rights lawyers are:



- **Threatened**, summoned, interrogated
- **Arrested** without cause
- **Prosecuted** without due process
- **Charged** with manufactured crimes
- **Convicted** in sham trials
- **Banned** from practicing law
- **Imprisoned** for lengthy periods

***Intensifying repression after the  
Woman Life Freedom movement:***

**66+**

**lawyers detained** to block legal defense of arrested protesters.

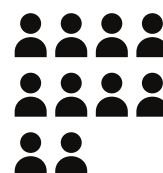
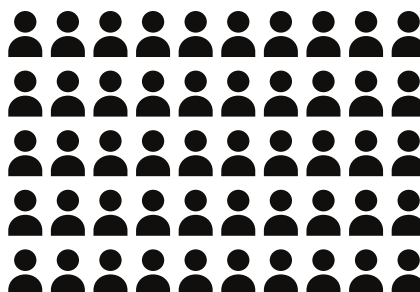
**10 YEARS AGO:**

50+ human rights lawyers in Iran

**NOW:**

Less than a dozen

***Dwindling  
numbers after  
relentless state  
persecution:***





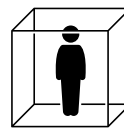
Homes searched, belongings confiscated without warrant



Right to remain silent met with violence



Detainees tortured to extract false confessions



Held in prolonged solitary confinement

## Defending clients **without due process:** An impossible task



Individuals arrested without lawful cause



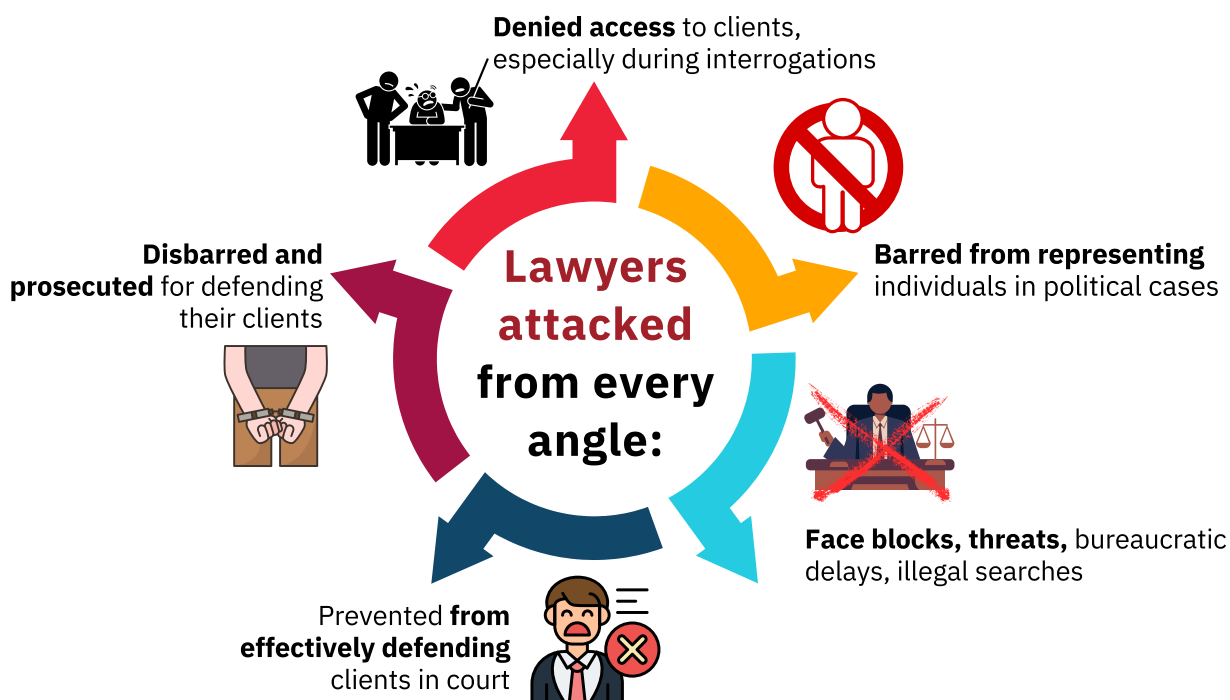
Meetings with clients surveilled, cut short



Incommunicado detention & lawyers kept uninformed



Held without charge or access to counsel



## Travesties of justice: Only a few of the many



**Mohammad Najafi**

In prison since 2018 and sentenced to 21+ years in multiple cases.



**Amirsalar Davoudi**

Temporarily released pending review of 10-year prison sentence.



**Taher Naqvi**

Serving 6-year prison sentence.



**Mohammad Reza Faghihi**

Serving 5-year prison sentence.



**Nasrin Sotoudeh**

Spent 6 years in prison, now on medical leave from 10-year sentence.

**Not allowed** to challenge “evidence” or provide evidence.

Torture-based **forced “confessions”** used for conviction.

**Not given copy of court rulings**, forced to copy verdicts by hand.

Acquittals often **kept secret**.

Appeal hearings **held without presence** of defendants/lawyers.



**Forced to navigate rigged trials**

Lawyers **not informed** of charges till trial.

Clients summoned to court **without lawyers’** knowledge.

Not given **full case files or time** to review files.

**Brief trials** can be over in minutes.

Trials held behind **closed doors**.

## **Crushing** legal profession’s independence

2020: Judicial bodies (not Bar Associations) **“supervise” Iran’s lawyers.**



2021: Iranian judiciary can issue and **revoke law licenses at will.**

## **7** ways Iran’s security agencies **control the judiciary**

**1**

**Security agents** act as “judicial associates” to interrogate detainees.

**2**

Political cases sent to **Revolutionary Courts** controlled by security agencies.

**3**

Trials presided by **hardline judges** **handpicked** by security agencies.

**4**

Interrogators’ remarks **repeated verbatim** by judges at trials.

**5**

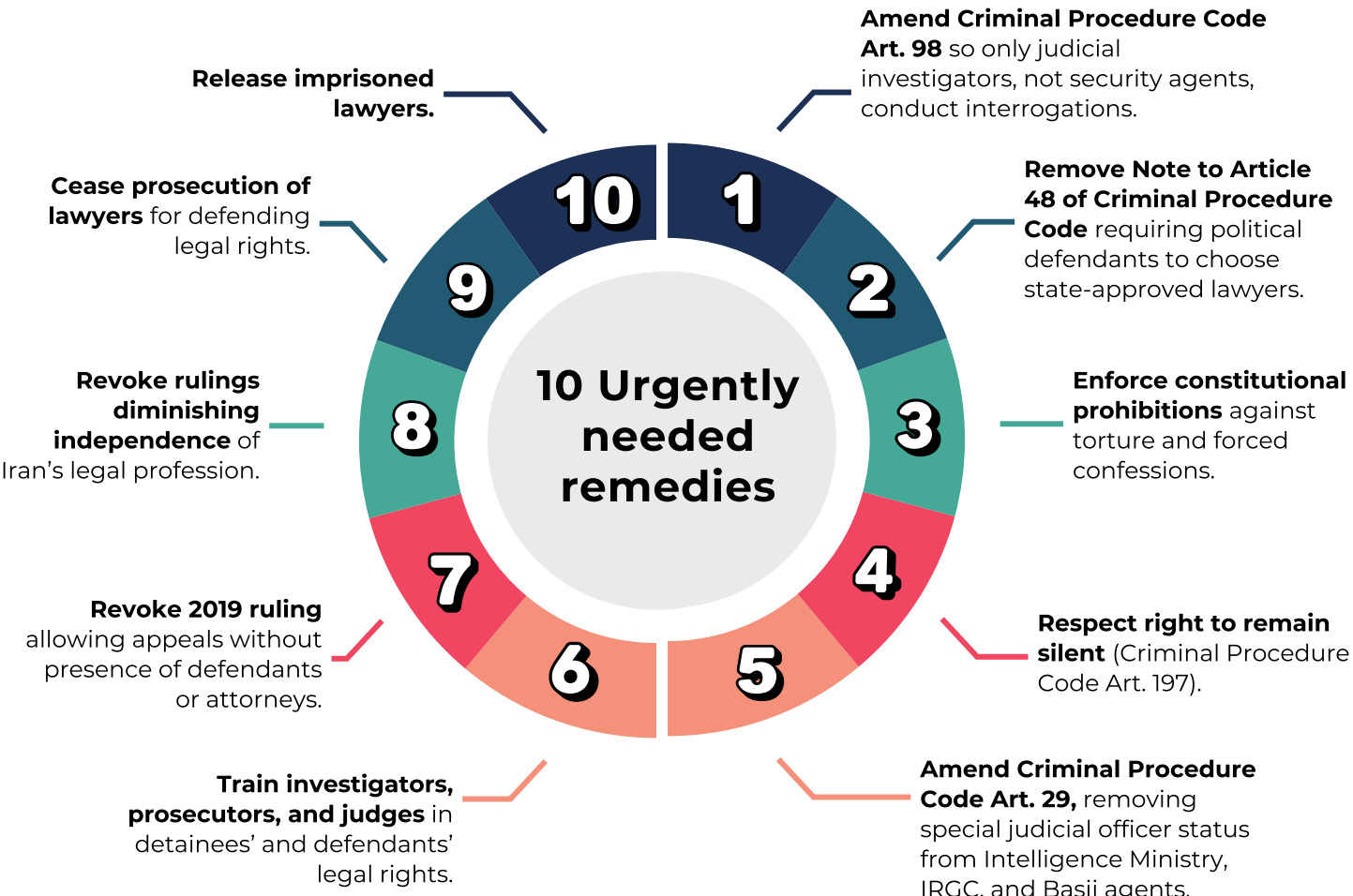
Appeals in Revolutionary Courts decided by branches **tied to security agencies.**

**6**

Judges ignore reports of **torture, forced confessions**, other legal violations.

**7**

Judiciary offers **no accountability for crimes**, including deaths in custody.



## Violations of Iranian and international law

**UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers:** Lawyers must be able to work without hindrance, can't be prosecuted for their work.

**International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights** (Iran is signatory), Iran's constitution (Art. 35) & Criminal Procedure Code (Art. 190) all guarantee right to counsel of choice.

**Article 38 of Iran's constitution:** Forbids torture and use of torture-tainted confessions.