# More School Poisonings Reported in Iran

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Gas and chemical attacks continued in Iran, targeting mostly girls’ schools Wednesday in several cities, including Tehran, VOA’s Persian service reported. Dozens of students were hospitalized.

According to the reports received by VOA and videos posted on social media, at least five schools in different provinces of Iran were attacked with chemical gases.

The serial poisonings of mostly female students began November 30, 2022, in the city of Qom and has continued to spread across the country.

In mid-March, Iran state media reported that than 1,200 Iranian girls from at least 60 schools had become ill in the attacks. Human rights activists in Iran had put the number at more than 7,000 students.

On Tuesday, Amnesty International warned that the "rights to education, health and life of millions of schoolgirls are at risk amid ongoing chemical gas attacks deliberately targeting girls' schools in Iran."

Amnesty accused Iranian authorities of failing to adequately investigate and end the attacks and dismissing the girls’ symptoms as “stress,” “excitement” and/or “mental contagion.”

On Saturday, an Iranian official blamed the attacks on the mischief of students.

"The few cases of poisoning that occurred in [the] girls' schools were very limited. The mischief of some students was to close the classes," Seyyed Majid Mirahmadi, the deputy interior minister, said Saturday.

On March 7, Mirahmadi said on state television that "a number of people have been arrested in five provinces," according to The Guardian newspaper, though he did not provide details on those detained. On March 15, Iranian police reported the arrests of 110 suspects.

Another senior member of the government, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi, said there was no "solid evidence" to show that students were poisoned.