

# URGENT ACTION

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE DENIED HEALTH CARE

**Iranian prisoner of conscience Hossein Ronaghi Maleki is on hunger strike to protest against the conditions of political prisoners. His health is deteriorating rapidly and he needs urgent medical care.**

**Hossein Ronaghi Maleki**, a 28-year-old blogger, is on hunger strike in protest at the authorities' refusal to grant him medical leave and their harsh and unfair treatment of political prisoners and disregard for prisoners' welfare. He has been on several hunger strikes since his initial arrest in 2009. Hossein Ronaghi Maleki suffers from severe kidney, gastro-intestinal, bladder and heart problems, as a result of the torture he says he suffered in detention, and has undergone at least four operations, including one to remove his left kidney in June 2012. Prisoners in Evin Prison are held in poor conditions and inadequate medical facilities for those suffering serious health problems.

He was taken to Tehran's Shahid Modarres hospital on 28 August 2013 but later transferred back to Evin Prison without receiving medical treatment, despite medical experts insisting that he had renal and gastrointestinal bleeding and needs to be hospitalized. His parents have appealed several times to Tehran's Prosecutor General to grant their son medical leave so that he can receive the treatment he needs outside prison. Medical leave has been denied as the authorities argued that he remained active during a previous medical leave. Hossein Ronaghi Maleki's mother, Zoleikha Mousavi, launched her own hunger strike on 20 August in protest at the authorities' refusal to release her son, saying, "If Hossein is to die, I prefer to die, too".

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, arrested on 13 December 2009 after the unrest that followed the disputed June 2009 presidential election, is serving a 15-year sentence on charges that appear connected to his writing on his blog.

### **Please write immediately in Persian, Arabic, English or your own language:**

- ✓ Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Hossein Ronaghi Maleki immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and association;
- ✓ Calling on them to ensure that he receives any medical care he may require, including by granting him medical leave, and is treated humanely at all times and not punished in any way for his hunger strike;
- ✓ Calling on them to investigate allegations of torture immediately and impartially and bring to justice anyone found responsible in accordance with international fair trial standards.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 OCTOBER 2013 TO:**

#### Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Islamic Republic Street – End of Shahid  
Keshvar Doust Street,  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Email: [info\\_leader@leader.ir](mailto:info_leader@leader.ir)  
Twitter: [@khamenei\\_ir](https://twitter.com/khamenei_ir) #FreeHosseinRonaghi  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
Edareh koll Ravabet Omoumi va Tashrifat Ghoveh Gazaayeh,  
Pelak 4, Bon Bast Azizi 1,  
Balatar az tagato Pastoor,  
Khiyaban ValiAsr,

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Email: info@dadiran.ir  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**And copies to:**

Secretary General High Council for Human Rights

Mohammed Javad Larijani  
c/o Office of the Head of the Judiciary  
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave  
South of Serah-e Jomhouri  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Email: larijani@ipm.ir

**Salutation: Your Excellency** Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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### ADditional Information

After his arrest, Hossein Ronaghi Maleki was held in solitary confinement for over a year and was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. During an unfair trial in 2010, he was denied access to his defence lawyer and has said he told the judge he had been tortured but the judge answered that he “deserved it”. He was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment after the Revolutionary Court convicted him on charges that included “membership of the [illegal] internet group ‘Iran Proxy’”, “spreading propaganda against the system” and “insulting the Leader and the President”, apparently in connection with his peaceful activities including writing his blog. He went on hunger strike on May 2012 because the authorities refused to allow him leave from prison to receive medical treatment for a kidney ailment. On 26 May 2012, he wrote an open letter to Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayed ‘Ali Khamenei, outlining the reasons for his hunger strike. He wrote, “I hope that you at least pay attention to my dire situation, the status of political prisoners, our families, the illegal detention centres, and their conduct.”

He was released on bail on 2 July 2012 and resumed his blog three days later, writing, “After 32 months of not writing on my blog, I have come today . . . pen in hand and write to say that I am feeling well because my mother’s face is fresh [with happiness] and she does not cry”. Hossein Ronaghi Maleki was rearrested on 22 August 2012 while still on leave from prison, together with human rights activists who were assisting people at a relief camp for earthquake victims in East Azerbaijan province. He was taken first to Section 1 of Tabriz Prison, then to Evin Prison in Tehran and charged with “distributing unclean and non-hygienic goods” but again allowed medical leave on 6 November after payment of bail. He has had several kidney operations and needs to take regular medication. After his transfer to Evin Prison, he was not allowed to take his prescribed medicine.

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki writes a lot in prison, often either to the Iranian authorities or to other political prisoners. In October 2012, he wrote a letter to prominent lawyer and prisoner of conscience Nasrin Sotoudeh, who was on hunger strike protesting against the authorities’ illegal travel ban on her 12-year-old daughter. In August 2013, he was among 55 Iranian political prisoners who wrote to US President Barack Obama about the crippling effect of the economic sanctions on Iranian people and called on him and the Iranian government to build trust and diplomacy, which prompted a similar letter by 127 Iranian political and human rights activists, academics and students inside and outside the country.

On 27 August, 395 Iranian journalists, academics and civil, political and human rights activists wrote an open letter asking the Iranian government to release Hossein Ronaghi Maleki unconditionally, and reminding the authorities that they are ultimately responsible for the health and wellbeing of all political prisoners. Earlier, 41 political prisoners from Evin Prison had written to Tehran’s Prosecutor General alerting him that Hossein Ronaghi Maleki’s condition is critical and urging him to grant medical leave to the blogger.

Torture and other ill-treatment are common in Iran, particularly during interrogation when detainees are routinely denied access to a lawyer and are often held incommunicado. In his report to the 67th session of the General Assembly in February 2013, the Special Rapporteur on the situation on human rights in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, expressed concern about reports of the widespread use of torture in the country’s prisons. He reported that 78% of people who reported violations of their due process rights also reported that they were beaten during interrogation, that their reports of torture and ill-treatment were ignored by the judicial authorities, and that their “confessions” were used against them despite these complaints.

Name: Hossein Ronaghi Maleki  
Gender m/f: m

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