

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER BEING TORTURED IN EVIN

Iranian prisoner of conscience and human rights defender Arash Sadeghi is being subjected to torture by Revolutionary Guard officials who are blocking his access to urgent medical care. He is suffering from respiratory problems and a stomach ulcer that has led to internal bleeding, abdominal pain and digestive complications.

Critically-ill human rights defender **Arash Sadeghi** is being denied access to urgent medical care outside Evin prison by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Doctors say that he requires an extended period of hospitalization in order to restore his health, which severely deteriorated during his last hunger strike and has worsened as a result of his ongoing lack of access to medical treatment. He is suffering from severe kidney and respiratory problems. He has also developed a stomach ulcer that has led to internal bleeding, abdominal pain and digestive complications, preventing him from eating solid food. The Office of the Prosecutor in Tehran told his family in early February that the Revolutionary Guards are blocking his transfer to a hospital outside prison even though the office has authorized the transfer. The denial of access to medical care in these circumstances amounts to torture.

Arash Sadeghi is being punished for staging a 72-day hunger strike between October 2016 and January 2017, in protest at the imprisonment of his wife **Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee**, who is also a human rights defender. She has been sentenced to six years in prison on charges that include "insulting Islamic sanctities" for writing an unpublished fictional story about the practice of stoning. Arash Sadeghi's hunger strike led to a public outcry which eventually pressured the authorities to release his wife on temporary prison leave. However, soon after he ended his hunger strike and the media attention subsided, the Revolutionary Guards resorted to punitive tactics. First, they made his access to medical care conditional on his wife's return to prison. Then, they obstructed the judicial review of the couple's case by Iran's Supreme Court by preventing the transfer of the court files from the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. Finally, on 22 January, they rearrested and returned Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee to Evin prison despite the authorities having promised to extend her prison leave until her case had gone through the judicial review process. Three days later, Arash Sadeghi was moved to Section 350 of Evin prison, where political prisoners have limited contact with the outside world and are only allowed to make brief phone calls once a week. It has been months since the authorities last allowed the couple to see one another.

Please write immediately in English, Persian or your own language, urging the Iranian authorities to:

- Release Arash Sadeghi and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly through their human rights work;
- Stop using the denial of medical care as a form of additional punishment against Arash Sadeghi and ensure that he is immediately granted access to specialized medical care outside prison;
- Investigate those responsible for denying Arash Sadeghi medical care, which amounts to torture given his medical needs, and bring them to justice in proceedings that meet international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 APRIL 2017 TO:

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, Deadend of 1 Azizi
Above Pasteur Intersection
Vali Asr Street, Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

Prosecutor General of Tehran
Abbas Ja'fari Dolat Abadi
Tehran General and Revolutionary
Prosecution Office
Corner (Nabsh-e) of 15 Khordad Square
Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
President
Hassan Rouhani
The Presidency
Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square
Tehran, Iran

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. H.E. Hamid Baeidinejad, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 16 PRINCES GATE LONDON SW7 1PT, Tel: 02072254208 or 02072254209 Email: iranconsulate.lon@mfa.gov.ir Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fourth update of UA 174/13. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5231/2016/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee's rearrest on 22 January prompted Arash Sadeghi to renew his hunger strike. In response, the authorities moved him to Section 350 of Evin prison in order to limit his communications with the outside world and prevent news spreading about his hunger strike. They also briefly detained renowned human rights defender Shahnaz Akmal, who had actively shared information about Arash Sadeghi's health conditions during his last hunger strike. Arash Sadeghi ended his second hunger strike in early February, after Tehran's Prosecutor General promised to address his grievances. On 6 February, he was briefly transferred to a hospital outside prison, where he underwent a number of tests for his respiratory problems and was diagnosed with asthma. He was returned to prison the same day despite the hospital doctors warning that his return would seriously endanger his health and that he must instead be hospitalized.

Arash Sadeghi is serving a 15-year prison sentence: seven years and six months for "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security"; 18 months for "spreading propaganda against the system"; three years for "insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic"; and three years for "spreading lies and forming an illegal group". The court verdict cited over 50 peaceful human rights activities as "evidence" of his involvement in "actions against [national] security". They include: participation in peaceful gatherings protesting the detention of human rights defender Narges Mohammadi and the 2014 execution of political prisoner Gholamreza Khosravi Savadjani; denouncing physical assaults against political prisoners during a raid on Section 350 of Evin prison in April 2014; expressing solidarity with prisoners of conscience on Facebook; visiting families of those killed in the 1980s and during the 2009 post-presidential election crackdown; sending information regarding human rights violations to the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran; maintaining contact with Amnesty International and several members of the European Parliament; giving media interviews to BBC Persian, Radio Farda, Radio Zamaneh and the Human Rights News Agency (HRANA); writing critical posts on Facebook about the mass execution of political prisoners during the 1980s; and joining the anti-death penalty campaign Legam (Step by Step to Abolish the Death Penalty).

Arash Sadeghi and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee were arrested together on 6 September 2014. After their arrest, Arash Sadeghi was taken to Section 2A of Evin prison, which is under the administration of the Revolutionary Guards, and held mostly in solitary confinement for six months before being released on bail. He has said that during this period he suffered torture and other ill-treatment: "One of the interrogators beat me with his belt... sometimes he would squeeze my neck until I felt I was suffocating. Once, he hit me on the head so hard that I was dizzy for a couple of hours." He has said that the interrogators also used sexual humiliation by forcing him to take off his clothes and squat in the interrogation room and that, when he could hear his wife crying in the next cell, he was taunted with threats that she would be executed. During his trial, Arash Sadeghi told the judge that he had been tortured in detention. The judge laughed at him and said, "Everyone says that."

Arash Sadeghi's trial was unfair; it consisted of two brief sessions in May and June 2015 before a Revolutionary Court in Tehran and was conducted jointly with his wife's trial. They had no legal representation during their trial; their first lawyer was put under pressure by intelligence officials to withdraw from the case and the second was barred from reading the court files and eventually representing them. He said that when they objected to this, the court told them they could not have a lawyer of their own choosing and could only be represented by a court-appointed lawyer, which they refused. Arash Sadeghi says that the court hearings resembled an interrogation; the judge would read out the questions and he had to write down his answers.

Further information on UA: 174/13 Index: MDE 13/5811/2017 Issue Date: 3 March 2017