

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE IN CRITICAL HEALTH

Iranian prisoner of conscience and human rights defender Arash Sadeghi is critically ill and requires immediate hospitalization outside of prison. However, the authorities are refusing to authorize the transfer, apparently on the orders of the Revolutionary Guards. The denial of access to medical care in these circumstances amounts to torture.

Human rights defender **Arash Sadeghi**, aged 30, is suffering from worsening digestive complications and respiratory problems since his 71-day hunger strike due to the persistent refusal of prosecution authorities to allow his hospitalization outside of Tehran's Evin prison. He has been told by judiciary officials that this is on orders from the Revolutionary Guards and prison officials told him that the transfer to hospital "is out of [their] hands". On 6 August, he was taken to a hospital outside the prison where he underwent a colonoscopy and endoscopy, and had his stomach pumped, and he was then returned to prison after 48 hours. This is the fourth time since February 2017 that Arash Sadeghi has been taken to hospital but returned to prison prematurely before receiving the medical care he requires. Doctors advised that he requires long-term hospitalization in order to receive specialist treatment for his numerous health problems, which were caused by his prolonged hunger strike and exacerbated by ongoing lack of adequate medical care.

Arash Sadeghi suffers from chronic nausea, heart arrhythmia, asthma and a stomach ulcer, which prevents him from eating solid food, and the liquid diet he receives is poor in nutrients. He is on blood thinners and other medications. Prison officials told Arash Sadeghi that these medications are expensive and that he must start paying for them. Amnesty International understands that the hunger strike impaired Arash Sadeghi's kidney function, and that he has not had any subsequent tests conducted since he ended his strike in January 2017. Arash Sadeghi went on hunger strike in October 2016 to protest against the imprisonment of his wife Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, also a human rights defender, for writing a fictional story against the punishment of stoning. The hunger strike led to a public outcry, which compelled the authorities to release Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee on temporary prison leave on 2 January. However, she was rearrested on 22 January to resume serving her sentence.

Please write immediately in English, Persian, Spanish, French 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 27 SEPTEMBER 2017 TO:

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeghi Larijani
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
Office of the Prosecutor
Corner (Nabsh-e) of 15 Khordad Square
Tehran, Iran
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Permanent Representative, to the UN in Geneva
Mohsen Naziri Asl
The Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland

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 fifth update of UA 174/13. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5811/2017/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Arash Sadeghi has been imprisoned in Tehran's Evin prison since June 2016, serving two separate prison terms totalling 19 years. He is being punished for his peaceful human rights activities including communicating with Amnesty International and providing the organization with information on the human rights situation in Iran.

Other peaceful human rights activities cited in his court verdict as "evidence" of involvement in "actions against [national] security" 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 and several members of the European Parliament; giving media interviews; writing critical posts on Facebook about the mass execution of political prisoners during the 1980s; and joining the anti-death penalty campaign Step by Step to Abolish the Death Penalty, known by its Persian acronym *Legam*. For more information on the situation of human rights defenders in Iran, see Amnesty International's report: *Caught in a web of state repression: Iran's human rights defenders under attack*, 2 August 2017: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6446/2017/en/>

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 was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in August 2015 after Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted him of spurious charges including "spreading propaganda against the system", "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", "insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic" and "spreading lies". The court also activated a four-year suspended prison sentence from 2011, which similarly related to his peaceful activism. His trial, which was conducted jointly with his wife's trial, was grossly unfair. It consisted of two brief sessions in May and June 2015, with each lasting less than 15 minutes. 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. Arash Sadeghi has 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. In March 2017, 30 months was reduced from Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee's six year imprisonment sentence as part of a Nowrooz (Iranian New Year) pardon. In July 2017, Arash Sadeghi and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee's request for judicial review was denied.

The refusal of authorities to provide prisoners with medical care constitutes torture if such deprivation is intentional and inflicts "severe pain or suffering" for such purposes as punishment, coercion or intimidation, obtaining a "confession", or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind. See Amnesty International's report: *Health care taken hostage: Cruel denial of medical care in Iran's prisons*, 18 July 2016: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/4196/2016/en/>

Further information on UA: 174/13 Index: MDE 13/6928/2017 Issue Date: 16 August 2017