UA 174/13 5 July 2013 **URGENT ACTION** MDE 13/029/2013

# **GROWING FEARS FOR HUNGER STRIKER IN IRAN**

# IRAN

**Arash Sadeghi (m)**

Student activist, Arash Sadeghi, has been on hunger strike since 1 June to protest against his ill-treatment in Tehran’s Evin Prison. He has been held without charge and in solitary confinement since his arrest in January 2012. He is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment and may be in need of urgent medical care.

Arash Sadeghi, 26, a student activist banned from pursuing his university education and member of Mir Hossein Mousavi’s student team during the 2009 presidential campaign, was last arrested on 15 January 2012 and has been held in solitary confinement in Section 209 of Tehran’s Evin Prison since. During this period Arash Sadeghi has been permitted only two family visits with his grandfather. He has had no access to a lawyer and, despite repeated requests, his father has been unable to visit him or obtain information about his health from prison officials. His father has been intimidated and harassed by Ministry of Intelligence officials and warned against speaking to the media about his son.

Arash Sadeghi was arrested a number of times for participating in the demonstrations that followed the disputed presidential election in 2009. On 4 April 2010, Judge Pir-Abbas in Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court sentenced him to 74 lashes and six years in prison after convicting him of the vaguely-worded national security charges of "gathering and colluding against state security” and “spreading propaganda against the system”. He was acquitted on appeal of the latter charge and his sentence reduced to one year imprisonment and four-years suspended sentence for the former. Arash Sadeghi’s current detention is unrelated to his previous case but it is believed that he is being held under suspicion of "gathering and colluding against state security”, although he has not been formally charged. No further details are known and the case is said to be “under investigation”, meaning that he cannot have access to legal representation.

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

\* Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Arash Sadeghi immediately and unconditionally if he is being detained solely for exercising his rights to freedom of expression and assembly;

\* Urging them to protect Arash Sadeghi from torture or other ill-treatment and to provide him with all necessary medical care, and ensure he is treated humanely, and not punished in any way for his hunger strike;

\* Urging them to ensure that he is removed from solitary confinement and allowed family visits and access to a lawyer of his choosing.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 AUGUST 2013 TO: (Time difference = GMT + 3.5 hrs / BST + 2.5 hrs)**

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| Leader of the Islamic RepublicAyatollah Sayed ‘Ali KhameneiThe Office of the Supreme LeaderIslamic Republic Street – End of ShahidKeshvar Doust Street, Tehran, Islamic Republic of IranEmail: info\_leader@leader.ir Twitter: Call on #Iran leader@khamenei\_ir to release Arash SadeghiSalutation: *Your Excellency* | Head of the JudiciaryAyatollah Sadegh Larijanic/o Public Relations OfficeNumber 4, 2 Azizi Street intersectionTehran Islamic Republic of IranEmail: info@dadiran.ir (Subjectline: FAO Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani) Salutation: *Your Excellency* | **And copies to:**Secretary General High Council for Human RightsMohammed Javad Larijanic/o Office of the Head of the JudiciaryPasteur St, Vali Asr AveSouth of Serah-e JomhouriTehran, Islamic Republic of Iran Email: larijani@ipm.ir Salutation: *Your Excellency* |

**PLEASE SEND COPIES OF YOUR APPEAL TO**

His Excellency Ambassador M. Bernard Emié, Embassy of France, 58 Knightsbridge, London, SW1X 7JT

**Tel:** 020 70 73 1000

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Arash Sadeghi was first arrested on 9 July 2009 in the aftermath of the disputed presidential election. He had been a postgraduate student of Philosophy at Allameh Tabatabai University until he was banned from continuing his studies. He was held for 53 days in Section 2A of Tehran’s Evin Prison, which is under the control of the Revolutionary Guards, before being released on bail on 31 August 2009. During his detention, he was barred from making any telephone calls and his family were given no information about him. He was arrested again on 27 December 2009 and detained for 15 days until he was released in January 2010 after securing a bail of $96,000 [USD].

In November 2010, security forces looking to arrest Arash Sadeghi again broke a window and gained entry to his home in the middle of the night. Arash Sadeghi, who had been spending the night at his grandmother’s home, later said in an interview that his mother suffered a heart attack when the security forces broke in. She died four days later in hospital.

Between January 2010 and January 2012, it is believed that Arash Sadeghi was arrested on a number of other occasions and released again on bail. He was last arrested on 15 January 2012 and transferred straight to solitary confinement in Section 209 of Tehran’s Evin Prison, where he is thought to have been held ever since.

During an interview in November 2010 with Rooz Online News Agency, Arash Sadeghi recounted the torture and other ill-treatment he endured in prison. He said he was hung from the ceiling by one leg and left hanging for up to five hours at a time; he was beaten so severely that his shoulder was dislocated twice and his teeth were broken; he was forced to lick a soiled toilet bowl; his interrogators urinated on his face and in his mouth; he was banned from bathing; and he was slapped for several hours, resulting in the tearing of his ear drum. He said he was kicked and punched in the face while blindfolded, causing damage to his eyes and resulting in temporary loss of vision. He stated his interrogators at Evin Prison talked of charging him with “moharebeh” (enmity against God) and told him to “confess” in front of a film camera' to having connections with the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI) and with friends outside of Iran. When he refused, his interrogators threatened to arrest his mother and ensure that his father loses his military job. Arash Sadeghi’s father, Hossein Sadeghi, who works in the Iranian army, has since been frequently summoned by the intelligence officials who have threatened him with redundancy and eviction from his home which is owned by the state.

In his report to the 67th session of the UN General Assembly, Ahmed Shaheed, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran documented cases of long periods of solitary confinement without charge or access to legal counsel and physical and psychological torture during interrogations. The Special Rapporteur concluded that “these violations are products of legal incongruities, insufficient adherence to the rule of law, and the existence of widespread impunity.” Under Article 38 of the Iranian Constitution and Article 9 of the Law on Respect for Legitimate Freedoms and Safeguarding Citizens’ Rights, all forms of torture for the purpose of obtaining “confessions” are prohibited. Iran’s Penal Code also provides for the punishment of officials who torture citizens in order to obtain “confessions”. Moreover, in November 2011, the UN Human Rights Committee, which oversees implementation of the ICCPR, expressed concern about the average length of pre-trial detention periods in Iran in its Concluding Observations. The Committee stated that the Iranian authorities should “ensure that pre-trial detention is not excessively long in law and in practice, particularly through independent judicial supervision and prompt access to lawyers”.

**PLEASE CHECK WITH THE INDIVIDUALS AT RISK PROGRAMME AT AIUK BEFORE SENDING APPEALS AFTER 16 AUGUST 2013**

Individuals at Risk Programme, Amnesty International UK, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA, 0207 033 1572, iar@amnesty.org.uk.