

# URGENT ACTION

## ACTIVIST REPORTS ILL-TREATMENT IN PRISON

On 24 December 2019, Iranian officials subjected human rights defender **Narges Mohammadi** to ill-treatment during her transfer to Zanzan prison, according to a letter she has written. The transfer was seemingly in reprisal for her activism inside prison in support of families of people killed during protests in November 2019. She is a prisoner of conscience who must be immediately and unconditionally released.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*Head of Iran's State Prison Organization Ali Asghar Jahangir*  
Faraz Alley, Northern Wing of Yadegar Imam Highway  
Sa'dat Abad, Tehran, Iran

Dear Mr Jahangir,

Human rights defender **Narges Mohammadi** has written an open letter from prison in which she says she was subjected to what would amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment during her transfer to Zanzan prison, Zanzan province, on 24 December 2019. Her transfer was in apparent reprisal for participating in a peaceful sit-in in the women's ward of Evin prison to commemorate protesters killed by security forces during protests in November 2019. Narges Mohammadi is serving a 10-year prison term for her human rights work.

In her letter, Narges Mohammadi writes that, during the sit-in, prison authorities claimed her lawyer had come to see her, but that, when she left the ward to meet him, she was instead taken to the office of the head of Evin prison. She says that the head of the prison shouted at her, telling her to stop the sit-in or she would be dealt with. According to her letter, when she attempted to return to the women's ward, a prison official grabbed her elbow and forcefully pulled her back. Her hand then hit and broke a glass pane and started bleeding and, as she continued to be pulled, her "shoulder made a loud sound". She says she was then bundled into a waiting car while being punched on her back by officials she believed to be from the ministry of intelligence. During the two-hour journey to Zanzan prison her hand continued to bleed, which she felt to be of particular concern as she takes blood-thinning medication.

Since August 2019, Narges Mohammadi has been denied contact with her children, who moved abroad in July 2015 to live with their father after her arrest in May 2015.

**I urge you to release Narges Mohammadi immediately and unconditionally, as she is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for her peaceful human rights work. Pending her release, I urge you to grant her regular visits and telephone calls from her family, including her children; ensure that she is provided with immediate and continued access to the health care she needs outside prison; ensure that her allegations of ill-treatment are promptly investigated by an independent and impartial body; and protect her from further ill-treatment.**

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In a crackdown against nationwide protests that took place in more than 100 cities across Iran in November 2019, security forces used unlawful force, killing at least 304 people, including children, according to credible reports. The majority of the deaths Amnesty International has recorded occurred as a result of gunshots to the head, heart, neck or other vital organs, suggesting that the security forces were shooting to kill. The authorities arrested thousands of protesters and subjected some to enforced disappearances, incommunicado detention, and torture and other ill-treatment. The authorities have also threatened and arbitrarily detained some of the relatives of protesters killed, either as punishment for speaking to the media and human rights organizations or to stop them from doing so.

On 21 December 2019, Narges Mohammadi, along with others held in the women's ward of Evin prison, including Atena Daemi, Mojgan Keshavarz, Monireh Arabshahi, Saba Kordafshari, Samaneh Norouz Moradi, Soheila Hijab and Yasaman Aryani, announced their intention to hold a sit-in from that day in solidarity with the commemorations being held of those killed by security forces in the November 2019 protests on the 40<sup>th</sup> day following their deaths ([for more information](#)). On 26 December 2019, Narges Mohammadi issued an open letter describing ill-treatment during her transfer to Zanjan prison. On 27 December 2019, a state-run news agency reported that the public relations department of Evin prison had issued a statement denying this.

In July 2019, Gholamreza Ziaei was appointed as the new head of Evin prison. Since then, prisoners of conscience held in Evin prison have complained of worsening conditions. The complaints relate to the authorities reducing the frequency of in-person visits from once a month to every two and a half months; cancelling additional visitation days for women with children; and preventing prisoners from receiving reading materials brought by their families. Access to health care has also been conditioned on prisoners undertaking to pay for their own medical expenses.

Narges Mohammadi has been imprisoned since her arrest in May 2015. In 2011, she was sentenced to a six-year prison sentence, which stemmed solely from her peaceful human rights activities at the Centre for Human Rights Defenders. She was sentenced to a total of 16 years in prison in a separate case in May 2016, after being convicted following an unfair trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran of "forming a group composed of more than two people with the purpose of disrupting national security", "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", and "spreading propaganda against the system". Under Iran's sentencing guidelines, she is required to serve 10 years of this sentence. Her conviction was linked solely to her human rights work, including her involvement with the Campaign for Step by Step Abolition of the Death Penalty (Legam). Some of the "evidence" used against her included her media interviews about human rights violations, her participation in peaceful gatherings outside prisons to support families of death row prisoners, her contact with other human rights defenders including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi, her participation in peaceful protests to condemn acid attacks against women, and her meeting with Catherine Ashton, the former European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, which took place on International Women's Day, 8 March, in 2014.

In July 2016, Narges Mohammadi underwent a 20-day hunger strike in protest at the authorities' refusal to allow her to speak with her children. She ended the hunger strike after she was permitted to speak to her children and the Associate Prosecutor at Evin prison gave her a written commitment that she would be allowed to call her children once a week ([for more information](#)). Narges Mohammadi has health conditions which require her to have ongoing specialized health care, which she cannot receive in prison. She has said she is on blood-thinning medication because she is at risk of pulmonary embolisms (blockages in the blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the lungs) and her husband has said she has health issues that cause seizures and sometimes temporary partial paralysis.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Persian or English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 26 March 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Narges Mohammadi (she/her)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/4578/2016/en/>