

URGENT ACTION

COUPLE SENTENCED TO JAIL ON SECURITY CHARGES

Former student activist Arash Sadeghi and his wife, Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, have been sentenced to imprisonment on national security charges following grossly unfair trials. They have appealed their sentences.

Arash Sadeghi, a former student activist, was informed in August 2015 that he had been sentenced by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran to 15 years' imprisonment on charges including "spreading propaganda against the system", "gathering and colluding against national security" and "insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic." Amnesty International understands that Arash Sadeghi's posts on Facebook about political prisoners, his interviews with the media about time he has spent in prison and his communications with journalists have been used against him as "evidence." He had been arrested on 6 September 2014 and held in solitary confinement for six months, with no access to a lawyer. The court did not allow his lawyer to see his casefile, and said he could only have a lawyer if he or she was appointed by the court. Arash Sadeghi refused a court-appointed lawyer, so he had no legal representation at trial.

The court sentenced his wife, **Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee** to six years in prison for "insulting the sanctities of Islam" and "spreading propaganda against the system". The charges appear to have arisen from an unpublished story the authorities found in her house, and her Facebook posts about political prisoners. Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee was sentenced in her absence, as she was in hospital with an illness on the day she was tried. The court rejected her request to adjourn the hearing. Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee and Arash Sadeghi were arrested on 6 September 2014 by men believed to be Revolutionary Guards, and taken to Section 2A of Tehran's Evin Prison, where they have since said they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated. They were released on bail on 27 September 2014 and 14 March 2015 respectively.

Please write immediately in Persian, English, Spanish, French or your own language:

- Urging the Iranian authorities to quash the conviction and sentences of Arash Sadeghi and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, which are based on the couple's peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly;
- Reminding them that under international human rights law, anyone facing criminal charges must be given access to a lawyer of their own choosing throughout the criminal proceedings.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 NOVEMBER 2015 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:
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=suggest>
Twitter: @khamenei_ir (English) or
@Khamenei_es (Spanish)
Salutation: Your Excellency

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, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@humanrights-iran.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Hassan Rouhani
The Presidency
Pasteur Street, Pasteur Square
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Twitter: @HassanRouhani (English) and
@Rouhani_ir (Persian)

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. This is the second update of UA 174/13. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/057/2014/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Arash Sadeghi, a former student activist at Allameh Tabataba'i University, and his wife Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee were arrested on 6 September 2014 at Arash Sadeghi's workplace in Tehran by men in civilian clothes believed to belong to the Revolutionary Guards. The men showed no arrest warrant, and took them to their house, searched their possessions and seized items, including their laptops, notebooks and some CDs. They then transferred them to Section 2A of Tehran's Evin Prison where they were both held until they were released on bail.

Arash Sadeghi has said he was tortured and otherwise ill-treated: his interrogators kicked him, punched him in the head, slapped him and choked him. He was held in solitary confinement throughout, except for 15 days when he was detained in a cell with another detainee. He was allowed no access to a lawyer. Arash Sadeghi has also said his wife was interrogated near his cell, and he heard her crying, during the 20 days she was detained in Section 2A of Evin Prison. He has said that the authorities repeatedly put him under pressure by telling him that his wife had been accused of burning the Quran and was facing execution. This accusation was apparently based on a story Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee had written in which the main character burned the Quran after watching a film on stoning but eventually repented. The unpublished story is believed to have been used against her as "evidence" of "insulting the sanctities of Islam". Arash Sadeghi's interrogators are reported to have used printout copies of his Facebook messages and emails to journalists abroad and media outlets such as BBC Persian as "proof" of the charges against him. His participation in gatherings, including a peaceful gathering held to protest the execution of Gholamreza Khosravi Savadjani, who had been sentenced to death after an unfair trial, was also presented as "evidence" that he was guilty of "gathering and colluding against national security".

The lawyers Arash Sadeghi appointed were not allowed to take up his case and were barred from reading his casefile. Arash Sadeghi has said that when he objected, the court told him he could not have a lawyer of his own choosing and could only be represented by a lawyer appointed by the court. This denial of Arash Sadeghi's right to independent legal counsel arose from a provision in the new Code of Criminal Procedure, which entered into force in June 2015. Under Article 48 of the Code, people facing national security-related charges may only select their legal counsel for the investigation phase, which may last for months, from a roster of lawyers approved by the Head of the Judiciary. It appears, however, that the court has applied the restriction beyond the investigative stage.

Arash Sadeghi's hearing sessions, which were attended by a Revolutionary Guards official, were held in May and June 2015. In August, the couple were told that Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran had passed sentence on them. Arash Sadeghi's prison sentence is more than the maximum statutory punishment prescribed for the charges of which he was convicted. This is due to a provision in Iran's 2013 Penal Code that allows for the imposition of sentences exceeding the statutory maximum when there are more than three crimes. The provision stipulates that those facing multiple convictions must only serve the lengthiest single sentence. Arash Sadeghi also has to serve a suspended four-year prison sentence from a previous case, which he will have to serve if his recent sentence is upheld on appeal.

Two other men, Navid Kamran and Behnam Mousivand, who were arrested along with Arash Sadeghi and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee have each been sentenced to 18 months in prison for "spreading propaganda against the system".

Names: Arash Sadeghi; Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 174/13 Index: MDE 13/2520/2013 Issue Date: 28 September 2015