

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER NEEDS URGENT CANCER TESTS

Iranian human rights defender Arash Sadeghi has been diagnosed with a bone tumour that may be cancerous. The authorities are disregarding medical advice which recommends his immediate transfer to a facility specializing in cancer treatment.

Critically ill prisoner of conscience and human rights defender **Arash Sadeghi**, aged 31, has learned that he has a tumour in his elbow that may be cancerous. Over the past 18 months, he has experienced persistent pain in his elbow and shoulders. Instead of referring him for diagnostic tests, the prison clinic had only prescribed him anti-inflammatory drugs. In late May 2018, he finally received an X-ray in the prison clinic in Raja'i Shahr prison, Karaj. Soon afterwards, he received a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan outside prison. This was followed by an unexpected transfer to a medical expert specializing in cancer treatment. Arash Sadeghi has said that he was puzzled by this medical visit and his repeated requests for information from the doctor were left unanswered; he just overheard a conversation among the medical staff that he was suspected of having "bone sarcoma", which he later learned is a rare cancer that often starts in the bones of the arms or legs. On 13 June, he was transferred for another medical appointment outside the prison, during which he was allowed by a guard to briefly look at his medical file. This is when he found out that doctors had discovered a tumour in his elbow and advised that he be immediately admitted to the Cancer Institute of Imam Khomeini Hospital to establish whether it was cancerous. However, he and his family have not been allowed by the Prosecutor's Office to see his entire medical file.

In the days that followed, Arash Sadeghi talked to a member of staff at the prison clinic who told him that "time is of the essence" in his situation and that he should be immediately tested for bone cancer. His family subsequently appealed to the Prosecutor's Office in Tehran to authorize his transfer to Imam Khomeini Hospital. However, the Prosecutor's Office rejected their request and insisted that his treatment take place in Madani Hospital in Karaj. Amnesty International is concerned that Madani Hospital does not have the necessary equipment and expertise to diagnose and treat bone cancer. This hospital also has a partnership with the State Prison Organization, which allows the authorities to exercise full control over prisoners' medical records and to restrict or withdraw access to these records from prisoners and their families.

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

- Release Arash Sadeghi immediately and unconditionally, as he is imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly through his human rights work;
- Immediately provide Arash Sadeghi with the specialized medical care he needs outside prison, including cancer screening and treatment, while ensuring his rights to informed consent, confidentiality, privacy and full access to his medical file;
- Protect him from further torture and other ill-treatment, including through the denial of adequate medical care, and investigate those responsible for persistently denying him medical care and bring them to justice in proceedings that meet international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 AUGUST 2018 TO:

Prosecutor General of Tehran

Abbas Ja'fari Dolat Abadi
Office of the Prosecutor
Corner (Nabsh-e) of 15 Khordad Square
Tehran, Iran

Head of Raja'i Shahr Prison

Mostafa Ziayee
Raja'i Shahr Prison, Moazzen Blvd
Karaj, Gohardasht
Alborz Province, Iran

And copies to:

Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, Mohsen Naziri Asl
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28
1209 Geneva, Switzerland
Email: missionofiran@gmail.com

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 7th update of UA 174/13. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/mde13/7840/2018/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Arash Sadeghi has had worsening health problems since he went on a 71-day hunger strike in October 2016, including digestive, kidney and respiratory complications and heart arrhythmia. These health problems have been exacerbated due to the persistent refusal of prosecution authorities to allow his hospitalization outside of prison. Doctors have repeatedly advised that he requires long-term hospitalization in order to receive specialist treatment for his numerous health problems. However, prosecution and prison officials have blocked his access to urgent medical care, saying they are following the orders of Revolutionary Guards officials.

Amnesty International has previously stated that the refusal of authorities to provide Arash Sadeghi with adequate medical care outside prison, in his circumstances, amounts to torture, as the deprivation is intentional and has inflicted severe pain and suffering on him for the purposes of punishment and intimidation.

Arash Sadeghi has been imprisoned 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. His court verdict cites over 50 peaceful human rights activities as “evidence” of his involvement in “actions against national security”, many of them relating to the dissemination of information about human rights abuses. They include giving media interviews to BBC Persian, Radio Farda, Radio Zamaneh and the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA); expressing solidarity with prisoners of conscience on Facebook; denouncing physical assaults against prisoners during a raid on Section 350 of Evin prison in April 2014; participating in peaceful protests against the detention of human rights defender Narges Mohammadi; writing critical posts on Facebook about the mass executions of political dissidents during the 1980s; joining the Campaign for Step by Step Abolition of the Death Penalty (known by its Persian acronym, Legam); communicating with human rights groups outside Iran; and sending information regarding human rights violations to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran and members of the European Parliament.

His trial before Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, in which his wife, Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, another human rights defender and prisoner of conscience, was also prosecuted, was grossly unfair. It consisted of two brief sessions in May and June 2015, each lasting less than 15 minutes. Neither Arash Sadeghi nor Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee had legal representation during their trial; their first lawyer was put under pressure by intelligence officials to withdraw from the case, while their second lawyer was barred from reading the court files and eventually prevented from 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.

Since 2013, the Iranian authorities have intensified their crackdown against human rights defenders. Dozens of human rights defenders have been imprisoned on spurious national security-related charges based solely on their peaceful human rights activities (see *Caught in a web of repression: Iran's human rights defenders under attack*, Index number: [MDE 13/6446/201](#)). International human rights law and standards guarantee the right to defend human rights. The UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders highlights states' obligation to not interfere, obstruct or violate the right to defend human rights and take necessary measures to protect human rights defenders against any violence, threats, retaliation or any arbitrary action stemming from the legitimate exercise of the right to defend human rights.

Name: Arash Sadeghi
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 174/13 Index: MDE 13/8687/2018 Issue Date: 29 June 2018