

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN JOURNALIST SENTENCED

Hengameh Shahidi, a female journalist, has been sentenced to six years, three months and one day's imprisonment for charges related to her peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. She remains free on bail, pending an appeal against her conviction and sentence, but if imprisoned, Amnesty International would consider her to be a prisoner of conscience and would call for her immediate and unconditional release.

On 30 November, Hengameh Shahidi's lawyer Mohammad Mostafaei went to Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, where he was informed that his client had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment for "gathering and colluding with intent to harm state security", to one year imprisonment for "propaganda against the system" and to 91 days for "insulting the president". Mohammad Mostafaei stated the same day that he intended to lodge an appeal against Hengameh Shahidi's sentence.

At her trial, Hengameh Shahidi, who was an advisor on women's issues to defeated presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi during his election campaign, was accused of taking part in demonstrations against the disputed election result between 13 and 17 June, giving an interview to the media, collecting signatures for the "One Million Signature Campaign (also known as the Campaign for Equality - which aims to end discrimination against women in Iranian law), supporting a campaign to end executions by stoning in Iran, signing numerous statements addressed to United Nations human rights bodies about human rights violations in Iran, and publishing articles on her blog.

Hengameh Shahidi was arrested on 30 June and was held in solitary confinement in Evin Prison in the capital Tehran for 50 days before being transferred to a cell holding another woman. Her interrogators threatened to arrest other family members, and on several occasions she was threatened with execution. On one occasion she was subjected to a mock execution. She was eventually released on bail of 900 million rials (over US\$90,000) on 1 November 2009, after she went on hunger strike in protest at her continued detention. On 4 November, after her release on bail, she was tried.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to review Hengameh Shahidi's conviction and sentence, as if imprisoned, she would be a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- Stating that participating in peaceful demonstrations, giving interviews and signing petitions calling for greater respect for human rights are not crimes and are permitted by the Iran's Constitution and by international law.
- Calling for an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into Hengameh Shahidi's allegations of torture in detention and for anyone responsible for abuses to be brought to justice promptly and fairly.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 JANUARY 2010 TO:

Head of the Provincial Judiciary in Tehran
Mr Ali Reza Avaei
Karimkhan Zand Avenue
Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Ally 17, No 152
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir
Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh
(Office of the Head of the Judiciary)
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran, 1316814737
Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: Via website:
<http://www.dadiran.ir/tabid/75/Default.aspx>
First starred box: your given name;

second starred box: your family name;
third: your email address
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary-General of National Trust Party
Mehdi Karroubi
Email: via website
<http://www.etemademelli.ir/contactus/>
(put name in first box, subject in fifth box and text in large box)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 231/09 (MDE 13/093/2009 and MDE 13/115/09). Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/093/2009/en and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/116/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Before her release, prison officials threatened Hengameh Shahidi that she would be punished if she continued her hunger strike. This contrasts with the impunity enjoyed by security officials responsible for human rights violations. The Norooz website stated that she has asked "Were the individuals who beat me in the basements of Evin prison brought before the [prison] disciplinary committee?". Amnesty International is not aware of any official investigation of these allegations.

The authorities used excessive force to quell largely peaceful protests which erupted after the announcement that incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the 12 June election, which many people disputed. The authorities have acknowledged 36 deaths, while the opposition claims that over 70 died. Over 4,000 were arrested, many of whom were tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention centres across the country. Some have alleged they were raped, although the authorities have denied this after cursory investigations and other measures which appear designed to hide, rather than uncover, the truth. Over 80 have been sentenced to prison terms or flogging in connection with the unrest, including those sentenced after mass "show trials" which began in August. At least five have been sentenced to death.

The authorities have continued to use force to dispel demonstrations held on days of national importance. Most recently, people demonstrating on 7 December 2009, the anniversary of the killing of students by the former Shah's forces in 1953, were met with beatings and use of tear gas by security forces. Over 200 were arrested in Tehran alone. Human rights defenders have also been targeted: on 5 December around 29 members of the group Mourning Mothers, which gathers every Saturday to protest at the killings of protestors and other human rights violations since the election, were arrested in Tehran. All have since been released.

For further information about the post-election events please see *Iran: Election contested, Repression compounded* (Index MDE 13/123/2009), December 2009, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/123/2009/en>

Further Information on UA: 231/09 Index: MDE 13/129/2009 Issue Date: 10 December 2009

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