

URGENT ACTION

HOSSEIN RONAGHI MALEKI FREE ON MEDICAL LEAVE

Iranian blogger Hossein Ronaghi Maleki was granted leave from Tehran's Evin Prison after payment of bail on 2 July, approximately three weeks after undergoing an operation he needed on his kidney.

Prisoner of conscience Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, who had surgery to remove his left kidney on or about 11 June 2012, spent one week in the intensive care unit of a hospital outside Evin Prison, and was then taken back to Section 350 of the prison. He had previously undergone at least four operations and Amnesty International understands that without the most recent operation, Hossein Ronaghi Maleki's functioning right kidney may have been harmed.

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki was released on leave on 2 July 2012 after payment of bail of 10 billion rials (approximately US\$815,000). He had been on hunger strike since late May 2012 in protest at the authorities' refusal to allow him medical leave and had been transferred to the hospital on 3 June.

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki had been sentenced to 15 years in prison after an unfair trial in 2010 on charges including "membership of the [illegal] internet group 'Iran Proxy'", "spreading propaganda against the system" and "insulting the Leader and the President", apparently in connection with articles he posted on his blog, 14 Tir. He returned to his blog on 5 July 2012, and wrote, "After 32 months of not writing on my blog, I have come today . . . pen in hand and write to say that I am feeling well because my mother's face is fresh [with happiness] and she does not cry".

His kidney problems are believed to be related to the torture or other ill-treatment to which he was subjected when he was first arrested. He says he told the judge during his trial held in 2010 that he was tortured in prison before his trial, but the judge answered that he "deserved it".

Before the surgery, his father had said that the government Medical Examiner and the prison doctors had ordered special post-operative medical care for Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, including medical leave, as provided for under the Prison Regulations.

Amnesty International considers Hossein Ronaghi Maleki to have been convicted and sentenced solely on account of his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression. If he were to return to prison, the organization would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Amnesty International is calling for Hossein Ronaghi Maleki's allegations of torture or other ill-treatment to be investigated immediately and impartially and for anyone found to be responsible for abuses to be brought to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network at this time. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation of Hossein Ronaghi Maleki and will take further action as appropriate.

This is the first update of UA 158/12. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/034/2012/en>

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