

URGENT ACTION

FOUR WOMEN JAILED FOR ATTENDING MAY DAY RALLY

Iranian labour rights activists **Anisha Assadolahi**, **Atefeh Rangriz** and **Neda Naji** and Iranian journalist **Marzieh Amiri** have been arbitrarily detained, without access to a lawyer, for weeks and accused of spurious national security offences in connection with a peaceful International Workers' Day gathering in Tehran on 1 May 2019. They were initially held in prolonged solitary confinement amounting to torture or other ill-treatment. Now held next to women convicted of violent crimes, **Atefeh Rangriz** and **Neda Naji** are at risk of assault.

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

*Prosecutor General of Tehran Ali Alghasi Mehr
Office of the Prosecutor
Corner (Nabsh-e) of 15 Khordad Square
Tehran, Iran*

Dear Mr Alghasi Mehr,

*Iranian labour rights activists **Anisha Assadolahi**, **Atefeh Rangriz** and **Neda Naji** and Iranian journalist **Marzieh Amiri** have been arbitrarily detained for weeks without access to a lawyer and inappropriately accused of national security offences. They are prisoners of conscience as they have been targeted solely in connection with a peaceful International Workers' Day gathering held in Tehran on 1 May 2019.*

*Following their arrest on 1 May, **Atefeh Rangriz** and **Neda Naji** were held in solitary confinement in section 209 of Tehran's Evin prison for several weeks, without access to their families, which constitutes torture or other ill-treatment. On 6 July, they were beaten by a prison guard after an argument started over their refusal to wear a chador on the way to the prison clinic. As a result, **Neda Naji** experienced a temporary impairment in her vision and **Atefeh Rangriz** suffered arm and shoulder injuries. On 8 July, after weeks of interrogation by intelligence officials, they were brought to the prosecutor's office in Evin prison and charged with "gathering and colluding... against national security", "spreading propaganda against the system", "disrupting public order" and "insulting officers on duty". Since mid-June, they have been held in Shahr-e Rey prison near Tehran, where women convicted of serious violent crimes are held in unsanitary conditions. There are frequent reports from the facility of assaults against inmates both by other inmates and prison staff. This has placed them in danger of assault, as well as exposure to infectious diseases.*

***Anisha Assadolahi** is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment in section 209 of Evin prison, where she has been held since 18 June without access to her family or lawyer. She was also arrested at the 1 May gathering. She was released on 5 May but rearrested on 18 June. **Marzieh Amiri** was arrested on 1 May after she sought information about those arrested at the gathering. She was held in a secret detention facility run by the Revolutionary Guards until 8 May, when she was moved to section 209 of Evin prison and placed in solitary confinement for 35 days. On 8 June, she was moved to the women's ward of Evin prison. She suffers from epilepsy and it is feared that the stresses associated with imprisonment will trigger seizures. Currently, she is experiencing dizziness and drops in her blood pressure.*

I urge you to release **Anisha Assadolahi, **Atefeh Rangriz**, **Neda Naji** and **Marzieh Amiri** immediately and unconditionally and drop all charges against them. Pending their release, please ensure that they can receive regular visits from their lawyers and families, as well as adequate medical care, and that **Neda Naji** and **Atefeh Rangriz** are transferred to Tehran's Evin prison, where they would be held with other women targeted for politically motivated reasons.**

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Atefeh Rangriz and Neda Naji were arrested on 1 May 2019 while attending a peaceful International Workers' Day gathering held outside Iran's parliament in Tehran, which was violently dispersed by security and intelligence officials. They spent their first night in Vozara detention centre in Tehran, where they were harassed and intimidated by officials, and were then transferred to Shahr-e Rey prison in the city of Varamin, near Tehran. After three days, they were relocated to section 209 of Evin prison, which is run by the ministry of intelligence, and held there until mid-June, mostly in solitary confinement. Following her transfer to section 209 of Evin prison on 5 May, Neda Naji waged a hunger strike for five days in protest at the authorities' refusal to allow her to call her family. She was finally allowed to do so briefly on the 14th day following her transfer to Evin prison. However, she was not allowed to receive any family visits until around 31 May. While held in solitary confinement, Atefeh Rangriz and Neda Naji were subjected to interrogations without a lawyer present and put under pressure to "confess" to planning protests intended to harm national security. Neda Naji was denied access to her asthma inhaler for 10 days, causing her both physical discomfort and mental distress. On 8 July, the two women were brought to the prosecutor's office in Evin prison and formally charged with "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", "spreading propaganda against the system", "disrupting public order" and "insulting public officers". The last charge was imposed in connection with them speaking out during separate interrogation sessions against the abusive treatment of their interrogators.

In mid-June, Atefeh Rangriz and Neda Naji were transferred back to Shahr-e Rey prison where there is a serious risk to both their safety and wellbeing. In this prison, women convicted of serious violent crimes are held in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. There are frequent reports from the facility of assaults against inmates both by other inmates and prison staff, as well as a prevalence of mental health issues, self-harm among prisoners, and rampant drug use. The prison water is reportedly salty and unsuitable for drinking, leaving prisoners with no option but to purchase overpriced containers of drinking water from the prison shop. The prison meal is also described as inedible, and most prisoners choose to purchase their food from the prison shop, which mainly consists of canned products. Prisoners generally receive financial assistance from their families or work in prison to purchase water and food. Other common complaints include frequent power outages, a lack of proper ventilation or air conditioning facilities, filthy and insufficient bathroom facilities, very low water pressure in the showers, and a severe shortage of beds, meaning many prisoners have to sleep on the floor. Prisoners are also denied access to adequate medical care, leading to the prevalence of contagious diseases including tuberculosis and infectious hepatitis. Under international law as reflected in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), prison authorities must provide prisoners with food of nutritional value, as well as drinking water and clean and sanitary conditions of detention.

Anisha Assadolahi was also arrested on 1 May 2019 while attending the gathering. She was allegedly subjected to beatings during her arrest, leaving bruises on her body. She spent her first night in Vozara detention centre in Tehran, where she was harassed and intimidated by officials, and then transferred to Shahr-e Rey prison near Tehran. She was released on 5 May but was arrested again by 12 ministry of intelligence officials at her home on 18 June. The officials searched the home intensively, going through the personal belongings of Anisha Assadolahi and her family and seizing various items including electronic devices, photographic albums and books. Anisha Assadolahi has since remained in solitary confinement in section 209 of Evin prison. Her family has repeatedly asked for a family visit, but the authorities have said that this is not allowed while she is undergoing interrogations. She has only been allowed to call her family twice: the first time on the day of her arrest and the second time after 14 days. On both occasions, the telephone calls lasted only a few minutes and took place in the presence of security officials, preventing her from speaking freely.

Marzieh Amiri is a journalist working with the *Shargh* newspaper. She was arrested on 1 May 2019 after she went to Iran's Security Police to seek information about the dozens of people arrested at the May Day gathering. She spent her first night in Vozara detention centre and was then transferred to an unidentified location. On 3 May, 10 intelligence officials took Marzieh Amiri to her family home, conducted a thorough search and confiscated the belongings of her and her family including mobile phones, laptops and books. She told her family on this day that she was being held in a secret detention facility run by the Revolutionary Guards. On 8 May, she was transferred to section 209 of Evin prison. There, she was held in solitary confinement for 35 days and interrogated. On 8 June, she was moved to the women's ward of Evin prison. She suffers from epilepsy and it is feared that the stresses associated with imprisonment will trigger seizures. Currently, she is experiencing dizziness and drops in her blood pressure. She has also lost about 7kg.

Prolonged solitary confinement breaches the Nelson Mandela Rules and constitutes torture or other ill-treatment. Authorities are further obliged to keep prisoners who are violent or threatening away from other prisoners and separate untried prisoners from convicted ones.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 20 August 2019

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Atefeh Rangriz (she/her); Neda Naji (she/her); Anisha Assadolahi (she/her); Marzieh Amiri(she/her).