

# URGENT ACTION

## PROMINENT TRADE UNIONIST UNLAWFULLY DETAINED

**Ismail Abdi, Secretary General of Iran's Teachers' Trade Association (ITTA), has been detained in Tehran's Evin Prison since 27 June for "organizing and participating in illegal gatherings" for his legitimate trade unionist activities. He is a prisoner of conscience.**

**Ismail (Esmail) Abdi** was arrested on 27 June after he went to the Prosecutor's Office at Evin Prison to inquire about the travel ban placed on him. He had been prevented from travelling to Armenia to apply for a visa to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> Education International World Congress in Ottawa, Canada in July 2015. Ismail Abdi was transferred to Section 2A of Evin Prison, which is run by the intelligence unit of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, and subjected to at least 17 days of interrogation, without access to his family or lawyer. It seems the authorities have denied Ismail Abdi the right of access to his lawyer based on a provision in Iran's new Code of Criminal Procedures which restricts access to legal counsel during the investigative phase, for people facing national-security-related charges, to only a list of lawyers approved by the Head of the Judiciary.

Ismail Abdi has said the interrogators accused him of "organizing and participating in illegal gatherings", which is not an offence under Iranian law. The "gatherings" were a number of peaceful demonstrations held in recent months by teachers and members of the ITTA, a legally constituted entity in Iran, in protest at poor wages, low education budget and imprisonment of teacher trade unionists.

If the legal process that has begun against Ismail Abdi leads to a conviction, he risks facing over a decade in jail because a suspended 10-year sentence he received following a 2010 arrest and subsequent conviction related to his trade union activities would also be implemented.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Ismail Abdi immediately and unconditionally and drop all charges against him as he is a prisoner of conscience held solely for his peaceful trade union activities;
- Urging them to ensure that he is granted regular access to an independent lawyer of his own choosing;
- Reminding them that Iran has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognizes the right of everyone to form and join trade unions of their choice for the promotion and protection of their economic and social interests.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 SEPTEMBER 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: via website  
<http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter>  
Twitter: @khamenei\_ir (English)  
@Khamenei\_es (Spanish)

#### **Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
c/o Public Relations Office  
Number 4, 2 Azizi Street intersection  
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Email: [info@humanrights-iran.ir](mailto: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)  
@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.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Before he was arrested on 27 June, intelligence officials had summoned Ismail Abdi for interrogation many times, and pressured him to resign from his post as ITTA General Secretary and cancel planned nationwide demonstrations that the ITTA had helped organize. During these interrogation sessions, which were frequently accompanied by foul language and insults, intelligence officials also warned Ismail Abdi against associating with international teachers' trade unions, including Education International, and said his participation in their international gatherings was a "red line".

On 3 May 2015, one day after the National Iranian Teachers' Day and four days before the scheduled date of a nationwide protest, intelligence officials summoned Ismail Abdi and threatened that a suspended 10-year sentence from 2010 would be immediately implemented unless he made a formal announcement on Facebook that he was resigning from his ITTA post and not taking part in any upcoming demonstrations. Ismail Abdi made the announcement under pressure, but the ITTA did not accept his resignation. The protest was also held as planned, with thousands of teachers gathering in front of the parliament in Tehran and outside the offices of the Ministry of Education in different cities.

Ismail Abdi's suspended sentence following his 2010 arrest resulted from him being convicted of "assembly and colluding against the state" and "participation in illegal trade union gatherings".

On 22 July, thousands of teachers attempted to gather in front of the Parliament in Tehran to protest against the harassment and abuse of trade unionist teachers and demand Ismail Abdi's release. Security forces stationed around parliament from early morning, however, disrupted the gathering and arrested scores of protesting teachers. According to an announcement by Iran's Minister of Education and Development on 27 July, all the teachers arrested during the protest have since been released.

At least four other teachers in Iran are serving prison sentences in connection with their legitimate trade union activities, including Sayed Mohammad Bagheri, Ali Akbar Baghani, Alireza Hashemi and Rasoul Bodaghi (see UA 130/10, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/027/2012/en/>).

Iran is a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which Article 22 (1) states: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests". Iran is also a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 8 of which guarantees both "the right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice" and "the right of trade unions to function freely subject to no limitations other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

Even though the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly are recognized under Articles 26 and 27 of the Iranian Constitution, they are restricted with Islamic qualifications such as public gatherings "are not detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam".

Name: Ismail Abdi

Gender m/f: m

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