

URGENT ACTION

RETIRED PROFESSOR JAILED FOR WRITING

Iranian retired university professor Hossein Rafiee has begun serving a prison sentence handed down in 2004 for his peaceful political activism. Hossein Rafiee is 70 and has several health problems, including high blood pressure and a heart condition. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Retired professor **Hossein Rafiee** (Mohammad Hossein Rafiee Fanood) was arrested without a warrant by Ministry of Intelligence officials on 16 June. Later the same day, these officials pressured the prosecutor on duty to issue an arrest warrant, eventually getting it on the order of the Prosecutor General of Tehran. Hossein Rafiee was then transferred to Section 8 of Evin Prison, which is severely overcrowded, poorly ventilated, with filthy cells, infested with insects, and lacks adequate sleeping and sanitation facilities.

Hossein Rafiee only found out the reason for his arrest after about a month later, when he was told he had to start serving a four-year prison sentence handed down by a Revolutionary Court in 2004 for “membership of an illegal group”, as he was a member of the banned political party *Melli Mazhabi* (National Religious Alliance).

On 25 May 2015, Hossein Rafiee received an additional six years by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, over his writings on social and political issues on his website. The court sentenced him to five years in prison for “membership of an illegal and anti-national security group [*Melli Mazhabi*]”, one year for “spreading propaganda against the system” by giving interviews to media “who are against the state” and for “issuing statements against the state’s security”, and fined him for use of a (banned) satellite dish. He was also banned from political and journalistic activities for two years. He has lodged an appeal but no date has been set for the hearing.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Hossein Rafiee (Mohammad Hossein Rafiee Fanood) immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience held solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Urging them to quash his convictions and sentences, and ensure he receives any medical attention he requires;
- Reminding them that the UN Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners require that all prison accommodation, including sleeping accommodation, meet all requirements of health.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 OCTOBER 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
Twitter: @khamenei_ir (English) or
@Khamenei_fa (Persian)
Email:
[http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?
p=suggest](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=suggest)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
c/o Public Relations Office
Number 4, Deadend of 1 Azizi
Above Pasteur Intersection
Vali Asr Street
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: 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) or
@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

Hossein Rafiee, a retired Tehran University chemistry professor and prolific writer (see www.mhrafieefanood.com), had been a vocal supporter of the nuclear talks between Iran and the P5 +1 (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States plus Germany). He is also a member of National Peace Council, founded in 2008 by Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi. After his arrest, he went on hunger strike, also refusing to take his medicine, in protest at being arrested and detained. He ended his hunger strike on 20 June, after his wife and friends asked him to stop as it was jeopardizing his health due to his already high blood pressure, a thyroid condition and allergies. He has to take daily medication for each of these conditions.

Since he has been detained in Section 8 of Evin Prison, Hossein Rafiee has detailed the severe overcrowding of the section: he shares his 20 square metre cell with 27 others, and sleeps on the floor, along with nine other men, as there are only six three-bunk beds in the cell. Hossein Rafiee has told his daughter, "I wonder if we are in a prison or a torture chamber." He has also said that Section 8 has only five toilets and showers for at least 200 prisoners, and there are constant queues for the bathroom or showers. While the section has a doctor on staff, the doctor has no medical equipment, so Hossein Rafiee's blood pressure is not being monitored regularly.

Hossein Rafiee had been arrested in February 2001, along with several other members of the banned political party *Melli Mazhabi* (National Religious Alliance), which is associated with the banned political party Iran Freedom Movement that advocates for social and political reform. He spent six months in pre-trial detention, much of it in solitary confinement, before being released on bail. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment in 2004, but apparently this sentence was only implemented in June 2015.

Iran's Islamic Penal Code, adopted in May 2013, maintains vaguely worded "crimes" such as "spreading propaganda against the system", "creating unease in the public mind", "insulting Islamic sanctities" and "membership of an illegal group". These ill-defined "crimes" are frequently used to curb the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. Such laws and practices violate Iran's obligations under Articles 18, 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party, guaranteeing freedom of thought, expression, peaceful assembly and association.

Article 10 of the UN Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states that "all accommodation provided for use of prisoners and in particular all sleeping accommodation shall meet all requirements of health, due regard being paid to climatic conditions and particularly cubic content of air, minimum floor space, lighting, heating and ventilation." Serious overcrowding, unsanitary environment and absence of sleeping facilities, when combined with the length of the period during which a prisoner is held in such conditions, can amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, contrary to Article 7 of the ICCPR which prohibits torture and other ill-treatment.

Name: Hossein Rafiee (Mohammad Hossein Rafiee Fanood)

Gender m/f: m

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