

# URGENT ACTION

## SIX YEARS IN JAIL FOR IRANIAN FILMMAKER

**Iranian filmmaker Keywan Karimi has been sentenced to six years in prison and 223 lashes, on charges that include “insulting Islamic sanctities” and “illicit relations”. He has appealed, and is awaiting the outcome. If jailed for charges relating to his peaceful activities, he will be a prisoner of conscience.**

**Keywan (Keyvan) Karimi** was sentenced on 13 October 2015 to six years in prison and 223 lashes, by a Revolutionary Court in Tehran. The court had convicted him of charges including “insulting Islamic sanctities” and “illicit relations”. Amnesty International understands that he was not told until his last court hearing that he faced the charge of “insulting Islamic sanctities” over a music video clip the authorities had found on his hard drive, for which he has received six years in prison. Instead, he had been charged with “spreading propaganda against the system”, which was not mentioned in the final ruling at all. Keywan Karimi’s appeal hearing, at which representatives of security and intelligence bodies were present, was held on 23 December.

Keywan Karimi had been arrested on 14 December 2013 and charged with “spreading propaganda against the system” in connection with his 2012 film *Neveshtan Rooye Shahr* (Writing on the City), about graffiti written on the walls of Tehran’s streets. Except for a trailer on Youtube, the film has not been publicly screened. The charge of “illicit relations falling short of adultery” was brought against Keywan Karimi for “shaking hands” and “being under one roof” with a woman “who had not covered her head and neck”. After he was arrested, Keywan Karimi was held in solitary confinement in Evin Prison without access to a lawyer. He was allowed to call his family for the first time one week after his arrest. He was released on bail after 12 days.

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

- Urging the Iranian authorities to ensure that Keywan Karimi is not punished for charges that stem from the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association and privacy;
- Reminding them that Articles 19, 21 and 22 and Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party respectively, protect the right to freedom of expression and association and the right to privacy;
- Expressing concern that Revolutionary Court hearings in Iran are seriously flawed and do not meet international fair trial standards, and that flogging sentences violate the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under international law.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 MARCH 2016 TO:**

#### The Office of the Supreme Leader

Ayatollah Sayed ‘Ali Khamenei  
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](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter)  
Twitter: @khamenei\_ir (English)  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadeq 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](mailto:info@humanrights-iran.ir)  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### **And copies to:**

President of the Islamic Republic 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

Keywan Karimi has directed 12 films which include documentaries as well as works of fiction. His documentary *The Broken Border* was awarded the best short documentary prize at the 2013 Beirut International Film Festival. The film focuses on the issue of smuggling state-subsidized gasoline from Iran to Iraq by an impoverished section of the Kurdish community in the western province of Kordestan. Another film directed by him, *The Adventure of a Married Couple*, was screened at Freiburg, San Sebastián and Zurich Film Festivals.

Keywan Karimi was arrested on 14 December 2013 at his home in Tehran, by men believed to belong to the Intelligence department of the Revolutionary Guards. They took him to Tehran's Evin Prison, where he was held in solitary confinement in Section 2A for 12 days. He was allowed to make a brief phone call to his family one week after his arrest but was not allowed to tell them he had been arrested or where he was being held. He could obtain a lawyer only after he had been released on bail.

Keywan Karimi's trial started on 11 May 2014 and concluded on 13 October 2015. He had seven hearings, each lasting around 15 to 20 minutes. His lawyer was present during the hearings but it appears that he was not given adequate time by the court to present his defence. Moreover, there are irregularities in the court's conviction and sentencing of Keywan Karimi. The verdict issued by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court neither acquitted Keywan Karimi of "spreading propaganda against the system" nor imposed any punishment for this charge. Instead, it imposed six years' imprisonment for "insulting the Islamic sanctities", of which he had not been informed until the court's last session. The verdict issued on 13 October predated the last court hearing which was held on 22 September. Keywan Karimi also faced other minor, unrelated charges.

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 "defamation of state officials". These ill-defined "crimes" are frequently used to curb the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression. Such laws and practices violate Iran's obligations under Articles 18, 19, 21 and 22 of the ICCPR guaranteeing freedom of thought, expression, assembly and association.

Corporal punishment, such as flogging, violates international law, which prohibits torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Name: Keywan (Keyvan) Karimi

Gender m/f: m

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