

URGENT ACTION

IRANIAN BLOGGER IN CRITICAL CONDITION

Iranian prisoner of conscience and blogger, Hossein Ronaghi Maleki, is still in critical condition in Tehran's Evin Prison after ending his hunger strike. He is in urgent need of specialized medical care which he cannot receive in prison.

On 5 September, **Hossein Ronaghi Maleki**, ended a 28-day hunger strike which he had started on 9 August in protest at the authorities' refusal to grant him medical leave and their harsh treatment of political prisoners and disregard for prisoners' welfare. Hossein Ronaghi Maleki suffers from severe kidney, gastro-intestinal, bladder and heart problems as a result of the torture he says he suffered in detention. He has had one kidney removed. The medical facilities in Evin Prison are not equipped to provide treatment for such serious health problems.

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki cited one of his reasons for ending his hunger strike as the deteriorating health of his mother, Zoleikha Mousavi, who had launched her own hunger strike on 20 August in protest at the authorities' refusal to release her son. His hunger strike has prompted letters from dozens of political prisoners and hundreds of journalists, academics and civil, political and human rights activists to the Iranian authorities, urging them to release him. Former president, Mohammad Khatami, also wrote a letter asking Hossein Ronaghi Maleki to end his hunger strike and expressing concern that the constraints and restrictions on Iranian people still continue today.

Hossein Ronaghi Maleki was arrested on 13 December 2009 after the unrest that followed the disputed June 2009 presidential election. He is serving a 15-year prison sentence for charges including "membership of the [illegal] internet group 'Iran Proxy'", "spreading propaganda against the system", and "insulting the Supreme Leader", apparently in connection with articles he posted on his blog.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Hossein Ronaghi Maleki immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and association;
- Calling on them to ensure that he urgently receive the medical care he requires, including by granting him medical leave, and is treated humanely at all times;
- Calling on them to investigate allegations of torture immediately and impartially and bring to justice anyone found responsible in accordance with international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 OCTOBER 2013 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: info_leader@leader.ir
Twitter: @khamenei_ir
#FreeHosseinRonaghiMaleki
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@dadiran.ir (Subject line: FAO
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani)
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General High Council for
Human Rights
Mohammed Javad Larijani
c/o Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave
South of Serah-e Jomhuri
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: larijani@ipm.ir (Subject line: FAO
Mohammad Javad Larijani)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 236/13. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/035/2013/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On ending his hunger strike, Hossein Ronaghi Maleki wrote a letter addressed to the Iranian people from inside Evin Prison. This is part of his letter (translated by <http://lalehsr.wordpress.com/>):

Dear noble people of Iran,

I Seyed Hossein Ronaghi Maleki who went on hunger strike on August 9, 2013 in protest of the blatant disregard for the life and health of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience on the part of officials; failure to address the medical needs of sick prisoners; mounting pressure on my family; arbitrary and illegal transfer of political prisoners to substandard prison facilities among criminals; number of prisoners being held incommunicado with no news of their condition; and in protest of the oppression and disregard for the law – so that the public is aware and responsible officials commit to listening to our grievances. During this path my mother and several of my friends supported me by also going on hunger strike so that we can be stronger in being the voice of the innocent and pointing to the human rights abuse of prisoners.

Now in consideration of my mother's deteriorating physical condition while she supported me in this path as she did in previous occasions; the physicians' concerns about the irreparable damage to my body; with respect to the wish of Seyed Mohammad Khatami and the dear daughters of Mousavi; my honourable cellmates; prisoners of conscience, political prisoners and their families; the mothers and families of the nation's martyr's; the group of activists; the artists; journalists and bloggers; mourning mothers; with gratitude to the empathy and compassion of friends, acquaintances and countrymen; with appreciation of friends and countrymen who went on hunger strike in my support in front of Iranian embassies in various countries; the evident empathy of the civil society; the Green movement that is alive; the spirit of the Iranian people that is compassionate and peaceful – I am ending my hunger strike after 28 days.

Since one of my goals in embarking on this hunger strike was to carry the voice of the innocent prisoners of conscience and political prisoners to the ears of officials and the people, and protest the lawlessness and injustices committed against the prisoners, with awareness of the sensitivity of the public opinion to the oppression against my family, I am glad that despite being physically weak and very ill, I was able to take this difficult road even though I have suffered grave physical damage.

The end of this hunger strike does not point to an end of legitimate demands and does not point to the end of objecting to the current situation, and during my imprisonment despite the danger of the maladies imposed on me stemming from my incarceration I will continue my protest by still refusing to take my medication. I hope those in charge pay attention to the plight of political prisoners and their families and acknowledge that the prison environment is not conducive to the needs of a person inflicted with disease, and they stop endangering the lives of ailing political prisoners by ignoring their condition.

In conclusion while I ask my mother and my friends to end their hunger strike, I will reiterate that the full responsibility of any incident or adverse event that comes about stemming from the insistence of authorities to keep me in prison causing my refusal to take medication in protest, and the lack of attention to my condition, rests fully on the shoulders of judicial authorities and those in charge, who through their negligence have created the current dire circumstances for me and for other prisoners.

Name: Hossein Ronaghi Maleki

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA 236/13 Index: MDE 13/036/2013 Issue Date: 06 September 2013