

URGENT ACTION

HEALTH OF TORTURED IRANIAN DEFENDER AT RISK

Arbitrarily detained Iranian human rights defender Narges Mohammadi is being tortured and otherwise ill-treated in Shahr-e Rey prison in Varamin, outside Tehran, including by being intentionally denied the specialized healthcare she requires in reprisal for her human rights work. She is a prisoner of conscience who must be immediately and unconditionally released.

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

Head of judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei

c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium

Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,

Prosecution authorities on the instruction of Ministry of Intelligence agents are subjecting human rights defender Narges Mohammadi, 50, who is arbitrarily detained in Shahr-e Rey prison (also known as Gharchak) in the city of Varamin, Tehran province, to torture and other ill-treatment. They are deliberately denying her adequate healthcare in reprisal for her public campaigning against the use of solitary confinement in Iran's prisons and for seeking accountability for hundreds of unlawful killings during the November 2019 nationwide protests. From about late April 2022 to mid-May 2022, the authorities withheld the medication she requires for serious health conditions, including for her heart and lungs. Narges Mohammadi reported that on 3 February 2022, following a heart attack, the prison doctor denied her adequate healthcare, while prosecution officials barred her transfer to hospital outside of prison for urgent healthcare, placing her life at risk. Only after Narges Mohammadi suffered a series of heart attacks on 16 February 2022, she was transferred to hospital, where she had emergency heart surgery. Against medical advice and before she recuperated, on 19 February 2022, authorities took her back to prison.

Narges Mohammadi has been unjustly in and out of prison for over a dozen years in relation to her human rights work. Most recently, Narges Mohammadi was convicted and sentenced to a total of 10 years and eight months in prison, 154 lashes and other sanctions in two separate cases both stemming solely from her human rights work; and in late April 2022, prosecution authorities summoned her for questioning in a new case also in relation to her peaceful human rights activities. Narges Mohammadi's latest imprisonment resumed on 21 April 2022, when Ministry of Intelligence agents arrested her while she out of prison on medical leave, began on 22 February 2022, and sent her to Gharchak to resume serving her sentences. There, prison authorities are holding her in cruel and inhumane conditions. In recent weeks, prisoners in Gharchak have reported overflowing sewage resulting in filthiness and foul odours, putting prisoners at risk of disease and exacerbating the unsanitary conditions in the wards, washing and toilet facilities. She is also held with women convicted of violent crimes and in late May 2022 her lawyer reported that a prisoner threatened to kill Narges Mohammadi and another prisoner held for political reasons.

I call on you to immediately and unconditionally release Narges Mohammadi as she is prisoner of conscience detained solely for her peaceful human rights activities, quash her unjust convictions and sentences, and drop any criminal proceedings against her in relation to the peaceful exercise of her human rights. Pending her release, she must be provided with adequate health care, including for treatment unavailable in prison, and protected from further torture and other ill-treatment. A prompt, independent, effective and impartial investigation into her allegations of torture and other ill-treatment must be conducted, with a view of bringing those responsible to justice in fair trials.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 16 November 2021, Narges Mohammadi was violently arrested while attending a memorial ceremony in the city of Karaj, Alborz province, to mark the second anniversary of the death of Ebrahim Ketabdar, who was killed by Iranian security forces during [nationwide protests](#) in November 2019. The day after her arrest, while held in solitary confinement in section 209 of Tehran's Evin prison, which is under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence, the authorities informed her that she was to begin serving a prison sentence of two years and six months following a 2021 conviction, and they also threatened to carry out her flogging sentence of 80 lashes imminently. She recounted being held in prolonged solitary confinement for 64 days in section 209, during which period Ministry of Intelligence agents subjected her to torture and other ill-treatment. She said Ministry of Intelligence agents kept bright lights on 24 hours a day; severely limited her access to fresh air and natural light to only thrice a week for 20 minutes each time; and kept her in almost near total isolation without meaningful contact with other prisoners; she only saw the guards who took her to toilet or brought food – all this caused her severe distress and suffering, including shortness of breath. On 4 January 2022, while still in solitary confinement, Narges Mohammadi was taken before Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran to stand trial in a second case. This trial was grossly unfair: it lasted just five minutes and she revealed afterwards being denied access to a lawyer both before and during the trial. On 15 January 2022, she was informed that the Court sentenced her to eight years and two months in prison; two years in internal “exile” in a city outside Tehran where she normally lives; a two-year ban on membership in political and social parties, groups or collectives; a two-year ban on engagement in online space, media and press; and 74 lashes. The January 2022 conviction and sentence are in addition to an earlier conviction by Branch 1177 of Criminal Court Two in Tehran, which, according to Narges Mohammadi's Instagram post dated 24 May 2021, sentenced her to two years and six months in prison, 80 lashes and two fines on charges that included “spreading propaganda against the system”. She was convicted of “offences” stemming from her participation, during an earlier period of imprisonment, in a sit-in with other prisoners in the women's ward of Evin prison between 21 and 24 December 2019 to protest [unlawful killings](#) during the November 2019 nationwide protests and making statements condemning the death penalty. She also spoke out against prison, male security and judicial officials subjecting her to torture and other ill-treatment, shortly after the peaceful sit-in, including through repeated beatings all over her body, roughly yanking her down a stairwell and throwing her against a wall. The office of the prosecutor in Tehran refused to process the complaint that Narges Mohammadi filed in late December 2019 in connection with these allegations of torture and other ill-treatment.

Narges Mohammadi is being denied the ongoing healthcare she requires following heart attacks and subsequent heart surgery she had earlier in 2022, including monitoring of the inserted stent, medication, the specialized diet recommended by her doctors and maintaining low levels of stress. In addition to this, Narges Mohammadi has a pre-existing lung disease, which is characterized by breathing difficulties, and for which she must use an inhaler and regularly take anticoagulant medications that prevent the formation of blood clots in her lungs.

On 19 January 2022, Narges Mohammadi was transferred from section 209 of Evin prison to Shahr-e Rey prison and placed in a ward with women convicted of serious violent crimes in breach of both Iranian law and international standards, which require the authorities to keep prisoners convicted of non-violent offences separate from prisoners convicted of violent offences. These unsafe conditions have contributed to a deterioration in Narges Mohammadi's mental well-being, particularly as she had reported receiving death threats by other prisoners in April and July 2020.

Narges Mohammadi was released from prison on 8 October 2020 after being unjustly imprisoned for over five years in a case also solely stemming from her human rights work. She reported that from the time of her release until her arbitrary arrest and detention on 16 November 2021, she received death threats from security forces and was arbitrarily arrested on at least five occasions and detained each time for periods reaching up to about a day. Each time, she was arrested while carrying out her peaceful human rights work, including supporting those who are unjustly detained by seeking to draw public attention to the human violations Iranian authorities subject them to and attending a gathering for the people of Afghanistan. On some of these occasions, Narges Mohammadi said that Ministry of Intelligence agents subjected her to torture and other ill-treatment, including by roughly pulling her hair and repeatedly beating her all over her body.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 18 August 2022

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Narges Mohammadi (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/2710/2020/en/>