

URGENT ACTION

JAILED FOR WOMEN'S RIGHT TO WATCH SPORTS

Ghoncheh Ghavami, a 25-year-old Iranian-British national, has been held in Tehran's Evin Prison since 30 June, largely in solitary confinement without access to her lawyer. She is a prisoner of conscience, arrested solely for taking part in a peaceful protest against the ban on women attending Volleyball World League matches in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Ghoncheh Ghavami, an Iranian-British national, was arrested on 30 June 2014 when she went to Tehran's Vozara Detention Center to collect her mobile phone, which had been taken from her earlier on 20 June when she was arrested at a protest against the ban on women being present in sport stadiums and detained in Vozara Detention Centre for several hours. On 30 June, plainclothes agents went with her to her house to confiscate her laptop and books and then took her to Section 2A of Evin Prison, where she was kept in solitary confinement, without access to her family or lawyer for 41 days. She was subsequently transferred to a cell shared with another inmate. Ghoncheh Ghavami has said that during her prolonged solitary confinement, the interrogators put her under psychological pressure, threatening to move her to Gharchak Prison in the county of Varamin, Tehran Province, where prisoners convicted of serious criminal offences are held in dismal conditions, and telling her that she "would not walk out of prison alive".

Amnesty International understands that Ghoncheh Ghavami has not been formally charged but remains under investigation for "propaganda against the state", stemming from her involvement in peaceful activities to end discrimination against women. On 1 September, she reportedly challenged the decision of the prosecutor to extend her detention for another two months, which is now being examined by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Ghoncheh Ghavami immediately and unconditionally, as she has been held solely for the peaceful exercise of her rights to freedoms of expression, association and assembly;
- Calling on them to ensure that she is protected from all forms of torture and other ill-treatment, and that she is no longer held in solitary confinement or isolation;
- Urging them to allow her regular visits from her family and her lawyer.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 OCTOBER 2014 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
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
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) and
@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

Iran has imposed a ban on women watching football games in stadiums since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. In 2012, the Security Department (*Herasat*) of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs extended this ban to volleyball matches. Iranian officials have frequently stated that the mixing of women and men in sport stadiums is not in the public interest and the discriminatory ban on Iranian women is for their own benefit, who need protection from the lewd behaviour of male fans. The ban became a subject of public controversy during the 2014 International Federation of Volleyball (FIVB) World League games, in which Iran was selected to play Italy, Brazil and Poland between May and July 2014. At the first game of the League between Iran and Brazil on 13 June, Iranian women were prevented from entering Tehran's Azadi stadium in Tehran while Brazilian women were allowed to enter to cheer their national volleyball team.

At the second game of the League on 20 June where Iran won over Italy, Ghoncheh Ghavami and dozens of other women and men gathered outside Tehran's Azadi Stadium, as part of a protest for women's right to equal access to the stadium. According to activists and journalists who were present, the police used excessive force including beatings to disperse the protestors, and arrested several of them, including Ghoncheh Ghavami. They said the women arrested were forced into police vans, taken to Vozara Detention Centre in Tehran and held there for several hours, during which police officers insulted and verbally abused them. They were apparently released after they surrendered their identification documents and signed pledges not to engage in similar activities in future. After her release, Ghoncheh Ghavami told a friend that during her arrest, she was slapped and dragged along the ground, which left her with bruises on her elbow and back.

Since her arrest on 30 June, Ghoncheh Ghavami's lawyer has not been allowed to meet her in prison or even access her court case file.

Under Article 48 of Iran's amended Code of Criminal Procedures, which became law in April 2014, "an accused [person] can request the presence of a lawyer at the onset of detention". However, according to the Note to the Article, if the accused has been detained on the suspicion of commission of certain offences including organized crime, crimes against national security, theft and drug-related offences, he or she will not be allowed access to a lawyer until up to a week after the arrest.

Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party, when anyone is arrested or detained, they must be notified of the reasons for this and their rights, including to the assistance of legal counsel. Detainees should have access to counsel from the outset of their detention, including during questioning, and should be brought promptly before a judge to rule on the lawfulness of the arrest or detention and on whether the detainee should be released pending trial. There is a presumption of release pending trial and detainees are entitled to compensation if they are held unlawfully.

The Human Rights Committee, which monitors the implementation of the ICCPR by all states parties including Iran, has stated that the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment under international law "relates not only to acts that cause physical pain but also to acts that cause mental suffering" and has stated, specifically, that prolonged solitary confinement may amount to acts prohibited by Article 7 of the ICCPR (General Comment 20, paras. 5 and 6).

Name: Ghoncheh Ghavami
Gender m/f: f