

URGENT ACTION

BRITISH-IRANIAN ACTIVIST ON HUNGER STRIKE

British-Iranian woman Ghoncheh Ghavami has gone on her second hunger strike after learning she had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment in Iran and banned from foreign travel for two years for protesting for the right of women to attend sport events in Iran. Her verdict has not been formally communicated to her lawyer, which prevents her from filing an appeal. Ghoncheh Ghavami is a prisoner of conscience who must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Ghoncheh Ghavami, a 25-year-old British-Iranian national, started a "dry" hunger strike (consuming no liquid and no food) on 1 November in protest at the Iranian authorities not yet formally communicating her verdict to either her or her lawyer. On 2 November, Ghoncheh Ghavami's lawyer stated he had been permitted to view the one-year imprisonment verdict for "spreading propaganda against the system". Despite Iranian law requiring courts to issue the verdict within one week after the conclusion of trial and to formally communicate it to the defendants within three days, neither Ghoncheh Ghavami nor her lawyer have received the verdict in writing. Until such time, they cannot appeal the sentence. In Iran, appeals must be lodged within 20 days of when the verdict is communicated to the defendant. Amnesty International is concerned that the delay in officially communicating the verdict may relate to attempts by the authorities to open a new case against Ghoncheh Ghavami.

Ghoncheh Ghavami met her lawyer for the first time during her court hearing on 14 October. On 3 November, Ghoncheh Ghavami also refused a phone call to her family as part of her protest.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to quash the verdict against Ghoncheh Ghavami and to release her immediately and unconditionally, as she is a prisoner of conscience who has been held solely for her peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly;
- Urging them to allow her regular visits from her family and lawyer and ensure she receives any medical care she might need;
- Pending her release, urging them to transfer Ghoncheh Ghavami out of solitary confinement.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 DECEMBER 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. This is the second update of UA 227/14. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/056/2014/en

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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. Ghoncheh Ghavami's lawyer met with her for the first time during her court hearing on 14 October 2014. The authorities also informed her family on 16 September that they could no longer pay her regular weekly visits, possibly in reprisal for their interviews with foreign media outlets. The family was finally able to visit Ghoncheh Ghavami on 4 October after they obtained a letter from the judge in charge of her case at the Revolutionary Court, permitting her a visit from her family.

Ghoncheh Ghavami 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 Varamin, south of Tehran, where prisoners convicted of serious criminal offences are held in dismal conditions, and telling her that she "would not walk out of prison alive".

Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a party, provides that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. Detention is considered arbitrary when a person is deprived of their liberty because they have exercised the rights and freedoms guaranteed in the ICCPR. Detention may also become arbitrary as a result of violation of the detainee's fair trial rights, including the rights to access legal counsel before trial, to be brought promptly before a judge, to challenge the lawfulness of detention and to have adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence. There is a presumption of release pending trial and detainees are entitled to compensation if they are held unlawfully.

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 suspicion of committing 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.

Name: Ghoncheh Ghavami

Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 227/14 Index: MDE 13/060/2014 Issue Date: 7 November 2014