

URGENT ACTION

PRISONERS IN IRAN AT RISK DURING ONGOING US AND ISRAELI STRIKES
Ongoing US and Israeli air strikes near prisons, as well as the targeting of security facilities where detainees are held, are placing prisoners, including children, at risk. Iranian authorities' refusal to release all those arbitrarily detained and grant humanitarian release to others imprisoned is knowingly placing those prisoners at risk of death or serious harm. Some prisoners have been transferred to unidentified locations or areas near potential military objectives, intensifying concerns for their safety. Authorities are also subjecting prisoners to enforced disappearance and denying them access to adequate food and water.

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 United Nations in Geneva
Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland*

Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,

Amid air strikes by the United States and Israel near prisons and the targeting of security facilities where detainees are commonly held, the Iranian authorities have released some prisoners, according to reports by human rights defenders. However, the authorities are refusing to release all those arbitrarily detained, including those held for political reasons, and refusing to grant temporary humanitarian release to others, knowingly leaving them at grave risk of death or serious harm. Detained children are amongst those at risk.

Prisoners' families and human rights defenders have reported to Amnesty International that, since the attacks began and authorities shut down the internet on 28 February, explosions have taken place near Evin prison and Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary in Tehran province; Zanjan prison, Zanjan province; and Mahabad prison, West Azerbaijan province; and reported strikes targeting security facilities that hold prisoners, including Ministry of Intelligence facilities and police stations in Tehran; Mahabad and Urumieh, West Azerbaijan province; Sanandaj, Kurdistan province; and Kermanshah, Kermanshah province.

I am also gravely concerned that Iranian authorities are denying prisoners adequate food and water, and subjecting some to enforced disappearance, as well as torture and other ill-treatment, including in reprisal for protesting. On 3 March 2026, security forces fired tear gas at prisoners after they staged protests in Mahabad prison calling for their release after hearing explosions, according to Kurdistan Human Rights Network. An informed source told Amnesty International that those held in Section 209 of Evin prison, used to hold activists, dissidents and others arrested by the Ministry of Intelligence, have been moved to unidentified locations. Authorities are giving families no or contradictory information about their whereabouts. Families' fears about the safety of their imprisoned relatives mounted after they received information that their loved ones may have been moved to the Shahrak Mahallati complex in the Mini-City area on the outskirts of Tehran, where military commanders and personnel reside. Prisoners' families and human rights defenders have also reported shortages of food, water, and sanitation products, including in Evin prison, Shahr-e Rey prison, and the Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary.

I urge you to immediately release those arbitrarily detained, including for financial debt, and to grant humanitarian release to other prisoners, especially pre-trial detainees; those convicted of minor, non-violent offences; and those eligible for conditional release, and to disclose the fate and whereabouts of all prisoners to their families. I further urge you to fulfil Iran's obligation under international humanitarian law to remove, to the extent feasible, all prisoners and other civilians from the vicinity of military objectives. I call on you to take all necessary measures to protect the right to life and health of all prisoners, end torture and other ill-treatment, ensure access to adequate food, water and medical care, and treat all prisoners humanely in line with international standards. Full internet access must also be immediately restored. I also urge you to grant access to international monitors.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Prisoners at risk include the thousands of individuals, including children, recently detained in connection to the December 2025 - January 2026 nationwide protests, amongst them protesters, as well as human rights defenders, lawyers, medical care workers, university students, ethnic and religious minorities. Those at risk also include individuals serving prolonged prison sentences, individuals under sentence of death and many others imprisoned across the country.

In early March 2026, officials told prisoners held on politically-motivated offences, including at Evin prison and Urumieh prison, that they would not be released while other prisoners, such as those held for ordinary crimes, would be eligible for temporary release, according to informed sources. The internet shutdown imposed since 28 February 2026 has severely restricted access to information on prisons, and the number of affected detention sites near where explosions have taken place is likely higher. In a letter dated 3 March 2026, human rights defender Reza Khandan, arbitrarily detained in Evin prison, wrote to the Head of the Judiciary raising grave fears for prisoners detained amid ongoing air strikes. In the letter, publicly available, he cited the 23 June 2025 air strikes on Evin prison, which the Israeli military [deliberately carried out](#), and which Amnesty International had called to be investigated as a war crime. He noted that at that time, "despite the numerous letters and warnings from myself... and my fellow cellmates... the release of Evin prisoners was prevented, and the catastrophe of the killing of dozens of prisoners, staff, family members and others took place". Reza Khandan added: "It has now been four days since the US and Israeli attack on Iran, and today our warnings and reminders have not been effective... Thousands of unlawfully detained prisoners remain trapped in prisons under the threat of bombardment day and night, and many essential services to prisoners have been cut off....If immediate action is not taken to release prisoners and the horrific and criminal event of the 12-day war or worse and more severe than that occurs... you must be held accountable before justice." According to an informed source, an individual imprisoned at Evin prison told his family, in a phone call on 3 March 2026, that when air strikes hit several buildings of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) near Evin prison complex earlier the same day, the sounds of the explosions were so powerful that prisoners feared the prison compound itself may have been struck. Another informed source revealed to Amnesty International that the electronic cards prisoners must top up to purchase food and water from prison shops have stopped working.

Direct attacks on civilian objects, such as prisons, constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes.

In June 2025, Iranian prison officials transferred [hundreds](#) of prisoners from Evin prison to other prisons in Tehran province, characterized by cruel and inhuman conditions, after the Israeli military's deliberate air strikes destroyed large parts of Evin prison on 23 June 2025. At that time, about 70 or so women prisoners were transferred to Shahr-e Ray prison (also known as Gharchark prison) in Varamin. The women prisoners were put into two small rooms and a corridor with only two toilets and two showers. Around 180 male prisoners were moved from Evin prison to the Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary and crammed into four rooms with a maximum capacity of 80. Greater Tehran Penitentiary presents appalling detention detentions. Prisoners have reported severe overcrowding, the denial of medical assistance and the refusal of authorities to separate prisoners convicted of non-violent. During and in the aftermath of the nationwide protests that erupted on 28 December 2025, authorities have arbitrarily [arrested](#) and detained thousands of protesters and dissidents. Amnesty International has for years repeatedly documented how hundreds of people protesters, journalists, artists, lawyers, writers, academics, university students, LGBTI individuals, members of ethnic and religious minorities and human rights defenders are arbitrarily detained, including solely for exercising their human rights. Others in arbitrary detention include individuals held following grossly unfair trials. Due process violations systematically documented by Amnesty International include the denial of the right to a lawyer from the time of arrest, admission of torture-tainted "confessions" as evidence, and summary trials. During the 12-day war in 2025 and again now, human rights defenders and prisoners have called on the Head of the Judiciary to implement a Supreme Judicial Council resolution allowing conditional release of prisoners during wartime emergencies.

On 28 February, the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran, resulting in 1,230 deaths as of 5 March, according to Iranian [state affiliated media](#) citing the Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Foundation; and on 4 March, an official from the Ministry of Health [stated](#) that at least 180 children were killed since 28 February.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 30 April 2026

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: all (he, she, them)