

# URGENT ACTION

## JAILED LAWYER ON HUNGER STRIKE

Human rights lawyer Amirsalar Davoudi has been on hunger strike since 9 February 2020, in protest at the Iranian authorities' refusal to grant him prison leave. He is jailed in Tehran's Evin prison after being sentenced to 29 years and three months in prison and 111 lashes on charges stemming from his human rights work. Under Iran's sentencing guidelines, he is required to serve 15 years in prison. He is a prisoner of conscience.

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

*Head of the Judiciary Ebrahim Raisi  
C/o Permanent Mission of Iran to the UN  
622 Third Ave., 34th floor  
New York, NY 10017, USA*

*Dear Mr Raisi,*

*On 9 February 2020, human rights lawyer **Amirsalar Davoudi** began a hunger strike in protest at the Iranian authorities' refusal to grant him prison leave. On 12 February, in an open letter from prison, Amirsalar Davoudi explained the reasons for his hunger strike, saying that, since his arrest, he had spent a prolonged period in solitary confinement, which would amount to torture or other ill-treatment. Amirsalar Davoudi was arrested on 20 November 2018 by agents from the intelligence unit of the judiciary at his workplace in Tehran and transferred to section 241 of Tehran's Evin prison, which is run by the same unit. There he was held in solitary confinement, during which he was frequently interrogated without a lawyer present. He was then moved to a cell with other prisoners in the same section, before being transferred to section 7 of the prison on 2 June 2019.*

*Amirsalar Davoudi was formally informed of his charges during the second half of January 2019. Subsequently, on 28 May 2019, he learned that branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran had convicted him, in his absence, on six charges and sentenced him to a total of 29 years and three months in prison and 111 lashes. The charges included "insulting the Supreme Leader", "spreading propaganda against the system" and "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security" in relation to his human rights work. The charges related to media interviews he had given and posts he had uploaded to a channel he runs on the mobile messaging app Telegram in which he raised concerns about the authorities' treatment of lawyers and, more generally, the human rights situation in Iran. Under Iran's sentencing guidelines, he has to serve the lengthiest single sentence imposed for the most serious charge, which in his case is 15 years for the charge of "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security".*

***I urge you to release Amirsalar Davoudi immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for his human rights work. Pending his release, ensure that he has regular contact with his family and a lawyer of his choosing, and that he receives adequate health care, in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy and informed consent. Please ensure that Iran's justice system is not misused to target or harass human rights lawyers and refrain from bringing criminal charges or any other proceedings against them that stem solely from the peaceful exercise of their rights.***

*Yours sincerely,*

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Between July and August 2018, Amirsalar Davoudi was summoned several times to the prosecutor's office in Evin prison to be questioned about a media interview he had given to the Persian-language service of Voice of America, a US broadcaster that has a large audience in Iran. The results of these interrogations formed the basis of his arrest on 20 November 2018. He was initially charged with five offences: "insulting the Supreme Leader", "spreading propaganda against the system", "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", "spreading lies" and "insulting officials". However, when his case was sent to branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran around mid-January 2019, the authorities opened a second case against him. In this new case, he was charged with two offences: "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security" and "collaborating with hostile governments", the latter imposed specifically in relation to the Voice of America interview. After combining both cases, the judge acquitted him of the charge of "collaborating with hostile governments", but convicted him on the other six charges and sentenced him to 15 years in prison for "forming a group with the purpose of disrupting national security", seven years and six months for "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security", three years for "spreading lies", two years and three months for "insulting the Supreme Leader", one year and six months for "spreading propaganda against the system", and 111 lashes for "insulting officials".

Amirsalar Davoudi is a human rights lawyer who has represented many prisoners of conscience including human rights defenders, other civil society activists and members of ethnic and religious minorities. He was the lawyer of Iranian Kurdish woman [Zeynab Jalalian](#), who was sentenced to death in early 2009 after being convicted of "enmity against God" (*moharebeh*) after a grossly unfair trial. He played an instrumental role in the subsequent commutation of her death sentence. He has also persistently advocated for Zeynab Jalalian's access to medical care.

Torture and other ill-treatment, including prolonged solitary confinement, are widespread and systematic in Iran, especially during interrogations. Under international law, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited absolutely, in all circumstances and without exception. Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party, prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment. The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (known as the Nelson Mandela Rules) define prolonged solitary confinement as "solitary confinement for a time period in excess of 15 consecutive days".

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 31 March 2020

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

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Amirsalar Davoudi (he/him)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/0636/2019/en/>