

URGENT ACTION

THREE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS ON HUNGER STRIKE

Iranian women human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee and Atena Daemi started a hunger strike on 3 February in protest at their transfer to a prison where women convicted of violent offences are held in inhumane conditions. Earlier, on 27 January, human rights defender Arash Sadeghi started a hunger strike to demand that they are returned to their previous place of detention. He is critically-ill.

On 24 January, unjustly imprisoned human rights defenders **Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee** and **Atena Daemi** were transferred from Tehran's Evin prison to Shahr-e Rey Prison in the city of Varamin, near Tehran. According to the women, male prison officials subjected them to insults and sexual slurs and began to kick and punch them when they peacefully protested against their transfer, arguing that it was illegal and violated the regulations governing the classification of prisoners based on the severity of the crime committed and the risk they pose to society and each other. They said the beating only stopped because two female guards intervened. Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee and Atena Daemi started a hunger strike on 3 February in protest at the transfer.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee and Atena Daemi are exposed to a high risk of being tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Shahr-e Rey prison is a disused chicken house that holds hundreds of women convicted of violent offences in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions, without access to safe drinkable water, decent food, medicine and fresh air. Reports from the prison indicate high levels of assault towards inmates both by other inmates and prison officials, as well as rampant drug use and infectious diseases. The Iranian authorities have a track record of threatening outspoken women prisoners of conscience with transfer to Shahr-e Rey prison.

Earlier, on 27 January, human rights defender **Arash Sadeghi** started a hunger strike in protest at the transfer of Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, to whom he is married, and Atena Daemi. This has raised grave concerns about his health as he already suffers from severe digestive and respiratory complications, abdominal pain and bleeding and an irregular heartbeat. Since December 2016, doctors have repeatedly said that he requires long-term specialized care in a hospital. However, the authorities have blocked his transfer to hospital in order to punish him for a previous hunger strike. Amnesty International has previously stated that this abusive practice amounts to torture.

Please write immediately in English, Persian or your own language calling on the Iranian authorities to:

- Release Arash Sadeghi, Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, and Atena Daemi immediately and unconditionally, as they are prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for their peaceful human rights work;
- Stop using the denial of health care to punish Arash Sadeghi and ensure that he is immediately granted access to specialized health care outside prison;
- Take immediate steps to improve prison conditions at Shahr-e Rey prison including by providing every prisoner with adequate medical care, clean water, adequate sanitation facilities, sufficient nutrient food and clean bedding and ensure that prisoners are treated humanely in accordance with international law and standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules, and allow international monitors to conduct inspection visits.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 MARCH 2018 TO:

High Council for Human Rights

Mohammad Javad Larijani
Esfaniar Boulevard, Niayesh Intersection
Vali Asr Avenue, Tehran, Iran

Head of Shahr-e Rey Prison

Mehdi Mohammadi
Tehran-Varamin Highway, Gharchak
Shahr-e Rey, Iran

And copies to:

Special Assistant to the Iranian President
for Civil Rights
Shahindokht Molaveri
162 Nejatollahi Street (after Sepand
intersection), Tehran, Iran

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 sixth update of UA 174/13. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6928/2017/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 24 January 2018, Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee and Atena Daemi were taken together to section 2A of Tehran's Evin prison, which is under the control of the Revolutionary Guards. After being held there for four hours, they were told that they would be transferred out of the prison. After repeatedly asking to where they were being taken and why, they were shown documents indicating that the Associate Prosecutor of Evin prison had ordered their transfer to Shahr-e Rey prison (also known as Gharchak prison). When the women refused to go, a senior official ordered the guards to beat them and force them into a vehicle. When male guards began to kick and punch the women, two female guards apparently intervened to stop the beating. The women were then transferred to Shahr-e Rey prison. It appears that this transfer was carried out in reprisal for the fact that the women have spoken out against human rights abuses from behind bars including through open letters and statements.

Former prisoners Amnesty International have spoken to frequently criticize the conditions of the Shahr-e Rey prison for severe overcrowding, a lack of beds, grossly insufficient and unsanitary toilet and shower facilities, salty drinking water, meagre rations of poor quality food, long periods of time without hot water, insufficient cleaning supplies, poor ventilation, the proliferation of infectious diseases and rampant drug use.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee has been imprisoned in Evin prison since October 2016, serving a six-year prison sentence primarily for writing an unpublished story about the practice of stoning. In March 2017, her sentence was reduced by 30 months as part of a Nowrooz (Iranian New Year) pardon. Atena Daemi has been imprisoned since November 2016, serving a seven-year sentence imposed for her peaceful human rights activities, including writing posts on Facebook and Twitter criticizing the authorities' execution record and distributing anti-death penalty leaflets. (For more information, see [Caught in a web of state repression: Iran's human rights defenders under attack.](#))

Arash Sadeghi has been imprisoned since June 2016, serving two separate prison terms totalling 19 years imposed for his peaceful human rights activities including communicating with Amnesty International and sending information to the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran and members of the European Parliament on the human rights situation in Iran. Since January 2017, when he ended a 71-day hunger strike launched in protest against the imprisonment of his wife, he has been in a critical state of health and the authorities have blocked his access to necessary health care outside prison in order to punish him.

In October 2017, Arash Sadeghi was transferred from Evin Prison to Raja'i Shahr prison in the city of Karaj, which also has dire conditions (see [Inhumane prison conditions need attention](#)). Currently, temperatures in the area are between -7°C and 4°C, yet the prison authorities have barred many prisoners from purchasing additional blankets for warmth. As a result, they have had to sew tattered towels together to use as makeshift blankets. Since his transfer to Raja'i Shahr prison, Arash Sadeghi has said that the prison authorities have refused to consistently provide him with the medications he takes, which his family purchases and brings to him in prison. He takes about 15 types of medication.

Amnesty International's research has highlighted that prosecution and prison authorities deliberately deny prisoners detained for politically motivated reasons, including prisoners of conscience, access to adequate health care, in many cases as an intentional act of cruelty intended to intimidate and punish prisoners or to extract forced "confessions". The refusal of authorities to provide prisoners with medical care constitutes torture if such deprivation is intentional and inflicts "severe pain or suffering" for such purposes as punishment, coercion or intimidation, obtaining a "confession", or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind (see [Health care taken hostage: Cruel denial of medical care in Iran's prisons](#)).

Name: Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, Arash Sadeghi, Athena Daemi

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 174/13 Index: MDE 13/7840/2018 Issue Date: 8 February 2018