

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
PRESS RELEASE**

AI Index: PRE 01/278/2009
17 July 2009

Iran: Women's rights activist and lawyer violently arrested - NEWS FLASH

Amnesty International fears the wave of arrests of civil society activists in Iran is intensifying after lawyer and human rights activist, Shadi Sadr, was violently arrested in Tehran this morning on her way to Friday prayers.

Shadi Sadr was walking with a group of women's rights activists along a busy road when unidentified plain clothed men pulled her into a car. She lost her headscarf and coat in the ensuing struggle but managed briefly to escape. She was quickly recaptured and beaten with batons before being taken away in the car to an unknown location.

"This was an illegal, arbitrary and violent arrest in which no attempt was made by the authorities to show identification or provide any explanation for their action," said Malcolm Smart, Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Programme."

"This is the latest of a continuing series of high profile arrests of Iranians - students, journalists, intellectuals, political and civil society activists - in the wake of protests over the disputed outcome of the presidential election."

Amnesty International is calling for Shadi Sadr to be immediately and unconditionally released. Shadi Sadr is the defence lawyer of Shiva Nazar Ahari, a human rights defender and member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, who was arrested at her home in Tehran on 14 June 2009, shortly after the presidential election, by security officials who searched her house and took away personal items. She is now believed to be held in Section 209 of Tehran's Evin Prison where Shadi Sadr, her lawyer, had not been able to gain access to her.

Background

Shadi Sadr, lawyer and journalist, was the director of *Raahi*, a legal advice centre for women until it was closed down. She founded *Zanan-e Iran* (Women of Iran), the first website dedicated to the work of Iranian women's rights activists and has written extensively about Iranian women and their legal rights. She has represented activists and journalists, several women sentenced to execution, whose convictions were subsequently overturned. She is also involved in Women's Field (<http://www.meydaan.com>), a group of women's rights activists who have launched several campaigns to defend women's rights, including the "Stop Stoning Forever" Campaign.

Shadi Sadr was among 33 women arrested in March 2007. Most had gathered outside a Tehran courtroom to protest peacefully against the trial of five women - Fariba Davoudi Mohajer, Shahla

Entesari, Noushin Ahmadi Khorassani, Parvin Ardalan and Sussan Tahmasebi - who were accused of "propaganda against the system", "acting against national security" and "participating in an illegal demonstration" in connection with the 12 June 2006 demonstration. Four of those on trial were also among those arrested, along with Shadi Sadr, a lawyer. Initially held in the Vozara detention centre, some were later transferred to Evin Prison. Most were released after several days, but Shadi Sadr and Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh - who is also involved in the "Stop Stoning Forever" Campaign - were held for over two weeks before being released on bail.

At a Revolutionary Court session in August 2007, which their lawyer was not allowed to attend and during which they were also questioned about their NGOs and their activities in the "Stop Stoning Forever" campaign, they were charged with illegal assembly, collusion against national security, disruption of public order and refusal to obey the orders of the police.- see for example p9
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE13/018/2008/en/63dd8933-e16d-11dc-9135-058f98b1fb80/mde130182008eng.pdf>

-ENDS-

Public Document

For more information please contact Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566 or email: press@amnesty.org

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK www.amnesty.org