

# URGENT ACTION

## JOURNALIST CHARGED WITH ESPIONAGE

**Iranian-American journalist Jason Rezaian is at risk of a long prison sentence on apparently spurious charges of espionage and national security-related offences, which appear to stem from his journalistic activities.**

**Jason Rezaian**, an Iran-based correspondent for the Washington Post, has been detained in Tehran's Evin Prison since 22 July 2014, when he was arrested. He has been charged with several serious national security-related offences, including "collaborating with hostile governments" and "spreading propaganda against the system", according to a statement by his lawyer, seen by the Washington Post. His lawyer said Jason Rezaian is accused of collecting information about "internal and foreign policy" and providing it to "individuals with hostile intent" but that no evidence had been provided to substantiate these accusations. Jason Rezaian will be tried before Branch 15 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court, but the date has not been set. The charges of espionage and "collaborating with hostile governments" each carry a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

Since his arrest, Jason Rezaian has been allowed only two visits by his lawyer, with their first significant meeting, on 20 April, taking place after he had been detained for almost nine months and lasting only 90 minutes. He spent a number of months in solitary confinement after his arrest, during which time he was interrogated repeatedly, according to his brother Ali Rezaian. He was allowed only occasional visits from his family. He has high blood pressure, for which he needs daily medication.

Jason Rezaian had been arrested along with his wife, Yeganeh Salehi, who writes for the United Arab Emirates newspaper *The National*. Their home was searched and their passports were confiscated. Their family did not learn their whereabouts for about a month. Yeganeh Salehi was released on bail in October.

### **Please write immediately in English, Persian, Arabic or your own language:**

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Jason Rezaian immediately and unconditionally if he is being held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and association through his work as a journalist;
- Urging them to allow Jason Rezaian regular access to his lawyer and any medical attention he may require, including specific medication he has to take for high blood pressure;
- Reminding them that Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is state party, protects the right to freedom of expression, which includes journalistic activities.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 JUNE 2015 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  
Twitter: @khamenei\_ir (English) or  
@Khamenei\_fa (Persian)  
Email: info\_leader@leader.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  
Email: media@rouhani.ir  
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 first update of UA 307/14. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE13/0065/2015/en/>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During Jason Rezaian's arrest, his and his wife's home was searched and their passports were confiscated. Their family did not learn their whereabouts for about a month after their arrest. A photographer and her husband were also arrested with Jason Rezaian and Yeganeh Salehi but were released the next month.

The United States government has called on the Iranian authorities to release Jason Rezaian, and did so during talks on the sidelines of the nuclear negotiations. In his statement published for the occasion of the Persian New Year (Nowrouz) on 20 March 2015, US President Barack Obama urged the Iranian government to release Jason Rezaian immediately.

Iran came 173<sup>rd</sup> out of 180 countries in the 2015 World Press Freedom Index produced by the NGO Reporters Without Borders.

Amnesty International has documented for years how journalists and media workers in Iran are systematically targeted and arrested on vaguely worded charges on account of their peaceful journalistic activities. Other journalists imprisoned in Iran include Mohammad Sadiq Kabudvand, Serajeddin Mirdamadi, Sajedeh Arabsorkhi, brothers Khosro and Masoud Kordpour, Reza Entesari, Hamidreza Moradi, Mostafa Abdi, and Kasra Nouri. For further information, see Amnesty International briefing *Jailed for being a journalist* <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/044/2014/en>.

Iran's Islamic Penal Code, adopted in May 2013, maintains vaguely worded "crimes" such as "spreading propaganda against the system", "creating unease in the public mind", "insulting Islamic sanctities" and "defamation of state officials". These ill-defined "crimes" are frequently used to curb the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression. Such laws and practices violate Iran's obligations under Articles 18, 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party, guaranteeing freedom of thought, expression, assembly and association respectively.

Article 9 of the ICCPR 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 their 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 communicate freely with counsel in confidence before and during trial, to be brought promptly before a civilian ordinary 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.

Name: Jason Rezaian  
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 307/14 Index: MDE 13/1522/2015 Issue Date: 24 April 2015