

URGENT ACTION

JAILED BLOGGER DENIED ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE

Iranian blogger Mohammad Reza Pourshajari, also known by his pen name of Siamak Mehr, is in urgent need of medical care that he cannot obtain in prison. He is serving a four-year sentence in Ghezel Hesar Prison in Karaj, north-west of Tehran.

Mohammad Reza Pourshajari, aged 53, has suffered two heart attacks in prison, in September 2012 and again in February 2013, after which the authorities moved him to a hospital outside the prison for five days. The Iranian authorities have denied him medical leave to receive the medical treatment he needs, including treatment for blockage in his arteries, against the advice of prison doctors. Mohammad Reza Pourshajari's daughter, Mitra Pourshajari, has told Amnesty International that the doctors in the medical facility attached to the prison have also diagnosed her father as having high blood sugar, though the prison administration told him they will no longer provide his medicine.

The Iranian authorities have pressured Mohammad Reza Pourshajari at least once, on or about 14 September 2013, to ask for a pardon from the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei, for his "crimes". He refused to do so, saying he had not committed any act that would require him to seek a pardon.

Mohammad Reza Pourshajari is serving four years in prison after he was convicted of the vaguely worded charges of "insulting Islamic sanctities", "insulting the Leader" and "acting against national security" in relation to his blog postings which are critical of the religious and political establishment. He spent eight months in solitary confinement awaiting trial, during which he was reportedly tortured and otherwise ill-treated, including by simulating a mock execution to make him "confess".

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Mohammad Reza Pourshajari immediately and unconditionally if he is being held solely for peacefully exercising his freedom of expression for writing on his blog;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that Mohammad Reza Pourshajari receives any medical treatment he may require, including by granting him medical leave and ensuring that he is treated humanely at all times;
- Calling on them to investigate allegations of torture immediately and impartially and bring to justice anyone found responsible in accordance with international fair trial standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 DECEMBER 2013 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
Email: info_leader@leader.ir
Twitter: @khameini_ir
#SaveMohammadRezaPourshajari
#SaveSiamakMehr
Salutation: Your Excellency

Head of the Judiciary

Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani
Edareh koll Ravabet Omoumi va
Tashrifat Ghoveh Gazaayeh,
Pelak 4, Bon Bast Azizi 1,
Balatar az tagato Pastoor,
Khiyaban ValiAsr,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: info@dadiran.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Secretary General High Council for
Human Rights
Mohammed Javad Larijani
c/o Office of the Head of the Judiciary
Pasteur St, Vali Asr Ave
South of Serah-e Jomhour
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Email: larijani@ipm.ir
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mohammad Reza Pourshajari was taken to a hospital outside Ghezel Hesar Prison for two hours, on or about 9 September 2013, where tests were carried out on his heart. He later told his daughter that the hospital doctors had told him that prison authorities would not allow him to be admitted to hospital for medical care for his heart. In addition to his heart condition, Mohammad Reza Pourshajari suffers from high blood sugar. For both these conditions he has been prescribed medication, but the prison medical facility has told him it would no longer provide this medicine. Amnesty International fears this may be in retribution for Mohammad Reza Pourshajari's refusal to seek a pardon from the Supreme Leader, though it is unclear whether the prison may have run out of medical supplies for prisoners.

In his most recent report of 10 September 2013, the UN Secretary General, Ban-Ki Moon, stated that sanctions have affected every sector of society and have contributed to shortages of necessary items, including medicines.

Mohammad Reza Pourshajari was arrested at his home in Karaj, north-west of Tehran, on 12 September 2010 because of a blog that he administered and wrote called "News of Iranian Soil" (*Gozarsh-e Khak-e Iran*). At the end of his trial on 21 December 2011, Branch 109 of the Revolutionary Court in Karaj convicted him of the vaguely worded charge of "insulting Islamic sanctities", and sentenced him to one year's imprisonment. Mohammad Reza Pourshajari had previously been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for "insulting the Leader" and "acting against national security", bringing his total sentence to four years' imprisonment. He appears to have been denied access to a lawyer since his arrest.

Other bloggers who have faced prosecution in Iran include Hossein Ronaghi Malaeki who is serving a 15-year sentence on charges that appear to be connected to his writings on his blog (see further information on UA 236/13, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/036/2013/en>) and Dr Mehdi Khazali who was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on 8 October 2013 for "propaganda against the system" and "gathering and colluding against national security", also in relation to his writings on his blog. In a separate case from February 2012, Mehdi Khazali had been sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison, followed by 10 years' "internal exile", and a fine on charges believed to include "spreading propaganda against the system", "gathering and colluding against national security" and "insulting officials", allegedly for his interview with the BBC's Persian service and writing a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei. He is at liberty awaiting the result of his appeal against his most recent sentence.

In May 2013, then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) signed into law revisions to the Islamic Penal Code. It maintains vaguely worded "crimes" such as "spreading lies", "spreading propaganda against the system", "creating unease in the public mind", "insulting Islamic sanctities" and "defamation of state officials". These ill-defined provisions are frequently used to curb peaceful dissent and prevent the full enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. 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, which guarantee freedom of belief, expression, assembly and association respectively.

Name: Mohammad Reza Pourshajari
Gender m/f: m

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