

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 113/05 (MDE 13/021/2005, 6 May 2005) and follow-up (MDE 13/027/2005, 15 June 2005) - Fear for safety / Medical concern

IRAN

Nasser Zarafshan (m), lawyer and human rights defender

Lawyer and human rights defender Nasser Zarafshan has reportedly been granted medical leave from prison for treatment of his kidney stones. He is now convalescing following surgery on one of his kidneys. According to his lawyer, Shirin Ebadi, the Iranian Judiciary permitted Nasser Zarafshan's temporary release around 4 July.

A spokesman for the Iranian Judiciary has reportedly stated that the length of Nasser Zarafshan's medical leave would depend on the decision of his doctors, and on them sending the relevant medical information to the Judiciary.

Nasser Zarafshan suffers from a chronic kidney condition which, according to the medical team at Evin prison, required specialist treatment outside the prison. Repeated requests for him to be granted leave in order to receive this treatment had allegedly been blocked by Tehran's Chief Prosecutor.

On 7 June, Nasser Zarafshan resumed a hunger strike he had begun during April, in protest at being denied medical treatment. According to his wife and his lawyer, eight days after he started his hunger strike, Nasser Zarafshan was very weak, his blood pressure was low, and he had lost 14 kilograms in weight. When one of his lawyers attempted to visit him on 15 June, he was turned away. In a telephone call to his wife, Nasser Zarafshan said that he had been vomiting blood.

Around 19 June he was taken to Labbafinejad Hospital in Tehran. However, due to his low blood pressure he could not be operated on and he was returned to Evin prison. On 21 June, while being transferred to solitary confinement in section 240 of the prison, apparently as punishment for his ongoing hunger strike, he lost consciousness. He was immediately returned to Labbafinejad Hospital where he underwent an operation on one of his kidneys. Afterwards, he was again transferred to Evin prison where his wife was allowed to visit him.

Nasser Zarafshan was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in March 2002, after a secret trial before a military court. He was imprisoned for his role in representing the families of two political activists murdered in November 1998 during a series of killings which came to be known in Iran as the "serial murders".

No further action is requested from the Urgent Action Network at present. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.