

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER IMPRISONED

Iranian human rights defender Narges Mohammadi, a mother of two young children, has begun serving a six-year sentence in Tehran's Evin Prison. Amnesty International considers her a prisoner of conscience who should be immediately and unconditionally released.

Two people, a man and a woman, possibly from the Ministry of Intelligence, went on 22 April to **Narges Mohammadi's** mother's home in Zanjan, north-east Iran, where Narges Mohammadi was staying and told her to come with them. The man and woman ignored repeated requests to show identification. They threatened to go into the home, and Narges Mohammadi did what they asked, to avoid frightening her five-year-old twins.

Two days later, Narges Mohammadi was able to call her children and speak briefly with her mother-in-law. She said that after one day in the Women's Ward of Evin Prison, she had been transferred to the prison's Section 209, which is believed to be under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence. Until Narges Mohammadi was permitted to phone her children, her whereabouts were unknown to her family despite their repeated attempts to find out where she was.

Narges Mohammadi's husband, Taghi (or Tagi) Rahmani, has told Amnesty International that he is very concerned, as she has a health condition that doctors have said is exacerbated by stress.

Narges Mohammadi, the Executive Chairperson for the Centre for Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), was originally sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment in September 2011 by Tehran's Revolutionary Court. Her sentence consisted of two five-year prison terms on separate counts of "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and a further year in prison for "spreading propaganda against the system". Following an appeal, her lawyer was informed on 4 March 2012 that on 15 January Branch 54 of the Tehran Appeals Court had reduced her sentence to six years. Her lawyer had successfully argued that two separate counts of "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" would be unfair, and she was acquitted of one count.

Narges Mohammadi has been banned from travelling abroad since 2009, when the Iranian authorities confiscated her passport.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of Narges Mohammadi by other means.

This is the second update of UA 36/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/026/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Narges Mohammadi's work has earned her prizes in several countries. She co-founded the CHRDR's End Child Executions committee, as well as the National Peace Council which aims to relax international tensions over Iran's nuclear policy and the Committee to Defend Free, Healthy and Fair Elections.

Narges Mohammadi has also previously spoken to Amnesty International about her health problems resulting from the time she has spent behind bars in recent years. She said many other Iranians have also come out of prison with serious medical problems.

The CHRDR was co-founded by prominent Iranian lawyers and activists. Since the authorities forcibly closed the Centre in December 2008, which was headed by Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi, its members have continued to carry out their work in support of human rights. They have faced repeated harassment, intimidation, arrest and imprisonment. Shirin Ebadi is currently outside Iran, as she believes she could not adequately carry out her human rights work if she returned to Iran.

Another of the CHRDR's founders, Abdolfattah Soltani, has been sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment in the remote city of Borazjan, some 620 miles south-west of Tehran, making it hard for his family to visit him, and banned from practising law for 20 years. Abdolfattah Soltani was arrested on 10 September 2011 on charges including "spreading propaganda against the system", setting up an illegal opposition group" and "gathering and colluding with intent to harm national security". He also faced charges of "accepting an illegal prize and illegal earnings," relating to his acceptance of the Nuremberg International Human Rights Award in 2009. Amnesty International has previously recognized the 58-year-old lawyer as a prisoner of conscience, held solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association, including his work as a defence lawyer and in the Centre.

Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, also a co-founder of the CHRDR, was sentenced in July 2011 to nine years' imprisonment on charges relating to his alleged involvement in seeking the "soft overthrow" of the government and "spreading propaganda against the system". He was also banned from teaching and from his profession as a lawyer for 10 years. He is currently at liberty and told Amnesty International in February 2012 that although his appeal court hearing had been held three months earlier, he had not received notification of the verdict.

Name: Narges Mohammadi

Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 36/11 Index: MDE 13/026/2012 Issue Date: 30 April 2012