

URGENT ACTION

JAILED BLOGGER'S HEALTH WORSENING

The health of jailed Iranian blogger Mohammad Reza Pourshajari, a prisoner of conscience, is worsening. He is in urgent need of specialized medical treatment.

Mohammad Reza Pourshajari, aged 53, was taken to the medical facility of Ghezal Hesar Prison on 4 January when he was suddenly unable to breathe. He was given an injection, but the medical staff would not tell him what it contained when he asked.

The Prosecutor General of Alborz Province, in Karaj, north-west of Tehran, had asked the prison authorities on 6 November 2013 to have Mohammad Reza Pourshajari undergo a medical examination to assess his health requirements. As a result, Mohammad Reza Pourshajari was taken to Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran on 25 December for one hour: he was examined by a nurse who was unable to examine his heart, for which he requires specialized care after he suffered two heart attacks for blockage in his arteries. Mohammad Reza Pourshajari's daughter, Mitra Pourshajari, has told Amnesty International that no diagnostic examination or medical tests were carried out during this check-up to assess her father's heart condition. Mohammad Reza Pourshajari has been in poor health since at least September 2012 when he suffered the first of two heart attacks. After his second, in February 2013, he was taken to a hospital outside the prison for five days.

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 in Iran. He spent eight months in solitary confinement awaiting trial, during which, according to his daughter, he was tortured and otherwise ill-treated: this included a mock execution to make him "confess". He has been denied access to a lawyer since he was arrested.

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

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Mohammad Reza Pourshajari immediately and unconditionally as he is imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression by writing on his blog;
- Urging them to ensure that Mohammad Reza Pourshajari receives any medical care he may require, grant him medical leave and ensure that he is treated humanely at all times;
- Calling on them to allow Mohammad Reza Pourshajari to have access to a lawyer.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 FEBRUARY 2014 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
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
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 293/13. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/041/2013/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

JAILED BLOGGER'S HEALTH WORSENING

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 was taken to a hospital outside Ghezel Hesar Prison for two hours, on or about 9 September, where tests were carried out on his heart. In addition to his heart condition, Mohammad Reza Pourshajari suffers from high blood sugar. Mitra Pourshajari, his daughter, has also told Amnesty International that her father is not being provided with a special diet to keep his blood sugar low in order to manage his diabetes. For both these conditions he has been prescribed medication, but the prison medical facility has told him it will no longer provide it. 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, said that sanctions had affected every sector of Iranian society and had 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" (*Gozareshe 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.

Prison conditions in Iran are notoriously poor, and sometimes amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Poor conditions, including overcrowding, inadequate food and sanitation, in addition to the denial of adequate medical care, exacerbate prisoners' medical problems. Many prisoners' requests for medical leave under Iranian prison regulations, even in very serious cases, are routinely denied.

Whether done on purpose or by neglect, failing to provide adequate medical care to prisoners is a breach of Iran's international human rights obligations. The denial of medical treatment may amount to a violation of the absolute prohibition against torture and other ill-treatment, which is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a party. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also recognises the right of all persons to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners also states that prisoners who require specialist treatment must be transferred to specialist institutions or civil hospitals. Equipment and pharmaceutical supplies in prison medical facilities are required to be proper for the medical care and treatment of sick prisoners.

Iran's own prison regulations are also routinely flouted by prison and judicial officials. The regulations governing the administration of Iranian prisons stipulate that a prisoner suffering from a serious medical condition that cannot be treated inside prison, or whose condition will worsen if they stay in prison, should be granted medical leave in order to receive treatment.

Name: Mohammad Reza Pourshajari

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 293/13 Index: MDE 13/002/2014 Issue Date: 11 January 2014